PRIMARY CAREGIVING FATHERS AND BREADWINNING MOTHERS: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS UNDERLYING THE DIVISION OF FAMILY ROLES

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Abstract

Over recent decades there has been significant progress towards gender equality in the workplace and at home. Transformations in work and childcare domains have occurred for families in Western societies, including de-gendered parenting, in which childcare responsibilities are shared equally or assumed primarily by the father. Although these arrangements constitute a recent and rare phenomenon, this increase in proportion has been matched by an academic interest.

Using quantitative data from traditional and role-reversed couples, this research aims to explore the social psychological mechanisms underlying non-normative behavioural choices, as well as the consequences for couples' relationship quality, well-being and life satisfaction. Traditional couples are those in which the mother bears primary responsibility for child care while the father is the main breadwinner. In non-traditional role-reversed couples the opposite occurs. A sample of 242 individual parents with children from birth to 12 years old, completed an extensive questionnaire. Involvement in work and childcare, social psychological variables, relationship and life satisfaction, perceptions of their division of responsibilities and socio-demographic characteristics were examined. Results show how social prescriptions and structural characteristics are limiting the intersection between the mother and the father role, and help us understand how both roles can be more similar than different. The findings also disclose how by being involved men are assisting women's career and help make a distinction between traditional and role reversed women's views of the appropriate parental role for men and women. Furthermore, the results contribute for a better understanding of how gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions differ between couples in different arrangements and how they relate to involvement in childcare and well-being, as well as the role of choice in well-being, life and marital satisfaction.

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Preface

Gender inequality is an urgent social issue in today's society. Gender is still associated with some form of discrimination, making gender inequality a characteristic of most societies that is present at different levels and contexts (Bradley, 2015; Dieckhoff, Gash & Steiber, 2015; LSE Commission on Gender, Inequality and Power, 2015; Monroe, 2016). The unbalanced social, economic and political hierarchies allow for such inequality to persist (Kabeer, 2016; Waylen, 2014). Although the past several decades have witnessed dramatic changes in women's political rights, economic privileges, and work patterns, gender hierarchy and inequalities persist (Glassdoor Economic Research, 2016). The massive entry of women into the labour force has been followed by transformations in societal norms and increased rejection of traditional attitudes across all European nations (Scott & Braun, 2009). Nevertheless, the change in allocation of domestic labour has been much smaller, and women still perform the lion's share of housework and childcare (Baxter et al., 2013; Bianchi et al., 2012; Kan, Sullivan & Gershuny, 2011).

While a growing body of theory and research has attempted to understand the barriers to a greater gender equality in the division of labour (Coltrane, 2000; Risman, 2004), findings also point to a slow but steady change in men's participation. Cross-national evidence suggests that men have increased their contribution to housework and childcare in nearly every country (Geist & Cohen, 2011; Hook & Wolfe, 2012; Kan et al., 2011), resulting in a growing convergence in men's and women's contributions over time (Sullivan, 2006). While there is an ongoing debate as to how much and under what conditions this change happens, prominent scholars (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Sullivan, 2011) have recently urged researchers to shift the focus of enquiry from the persistence of current inequalities to interactive processes of change.

The current research responds to this call by examining individuals on the forefront of social change; namely, couples who reverse parental and work roles, so that childcare responsibilities are assumed primarily by the father. Although still statistically rare, role reversed and consequently de-gendered parenting constitute a growing phenomenon (Fields, 2003; Locke, 2016). Even though couples are referenced, the sample studied was constituted of individual participants who were part of a couple, in some cases participants took part as a couple, however answers of each member of the couple were not compared directly.

Role reversing is hence a phenomenon of major theoretical and practical importance. Whatever the macro-level societal forces that drive social change, the change itself eventually takes place in the daily behavioural choices of individuals. In moving beyond gender as an organising system (Lorber, 2005, 2012), couples who reverse roles resist conventional images of motherhood and fatherhood and ubiquitous pressures towards a gender-based division of roles. Instead, their innovative approaches to balancing paid, unpaid work and childcare are likely to represent future trends towards non-gendered parenting arrangements (Gerson, 2009).

Given that stay-at-home fathers are a new phenomenon, research on this group is recent and scarce. More importantly, almost all evidence comes from interviews with very small qualitative samples. Specifically, studies have been conducted mainly in the USA and Australia, using qualitative methods with samples of 15-25 cases (e.g., Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004). The existing literature therefore does not permit a generalisation of the findings or a full understanding of the relationships between variables. There is little information on couples' sociological and social psychological characteristics, and little is known about the effects of non-traditional division of labour on family and life satisfaction, well-being and happiness (Forste & Fox, 2012).

The current study aims to conduct a comparative research between traditional and role-reversed couples in one quantitative design. This project has three key aims: 1) to fill the gap in the literature by understanding gender change, improving our knowledge on the socio-economic profile of these couples; 2) study the effects of gender ideologies, identities and attitudes on the division of family roles; and 3) study the effects of traditional and non-traditional roles on family and life satisfaction, well-being and happiness. For the purpose of this study, no distinction was made between the terminology related to relationships; spouses or partners serve to define heterosexual couples that have an ongoing relationship, cohabitation and at least one child together.

1. Setting the Stage: Historic, Institutional and Cultural Context

1.1 The Evolution of Paid and Unpaid Work

The observation of primitive societies, which depended on hunting and gathering, interestingly reveals that women and men were nearly equal in status, or at least the differences between the sexes were not as important as they became later in more developed societies (Nielsen, 1990). A gender system and gender differences became relevant when the division of labour was created. It became even more accentuated when the differentiation of paid and unpaid work occurred, not only in terms of meaning but the worth associated with it as well (Edgell, 2012; England, 2005; Weeks, 2011). The industrial revolution during the 19th century started to differentiate paid work as done at the workplace and "unpaid work" as done at the home. Paid work became increasingly fundamental in our lives, being contemporary identified as a 'natural prescription' rather than a social convention (Weeks, 2011). The glorified importance allocated to paid over unpaid work reinforces the choice of work over family, and the idea that paid work provides not only income but social status (Hochschild, 1997; Weeks, 2011).

This segregation of the public sphere from the domestic sphere ended in the allocation of different roles, making men the family breadwinners and women the

caregivers for the home and family (Galinsky & Matos, 2011; Poeschl, 2008). Over the last decades in Western societies, there has been an evolution in women's public sphere, translating on better employment and education conditions, an increase of economic privileges, social and political rights (Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Sullivan, 2006). Yet, less change has occurred in the domestic sphere, where inequality still persists (Scott & Braun, 2009; Sullivan, 2006). Even though men's hours of participation in fathering and domestic labour have risen (Hook, 2006; Robinson & Godbey, 1997) women still perform the biggest share of housework and childcare (Baxter et al., 2013; Bianchi et al., 2012; Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2011; Kan, Sullivan & Gershuny, 2011).

Although childcare has often been studied as part of the more general category of "household labour", it is important to note that childcare is substantially different from housework in several important ways. While relatively few people find pleasure in routine activities such as daily cooking, cleaning, and washing, involvement in childcare has a greater potential for emotional satisfaction and is often perceived by parents as a desirable moral obligation (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds & Alldred, 2003). It is therefore more acceptable to fully outsource housework than childcare and the consequences of neglecting housework are minor in comparison with those arising from the neglect of children. In line with these differences, studies have found that different factors determine father involvement in housework and childcare (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Deutsch et al., 1993).

1.2 Work and Parenting: Cultural Norms and Policies

The United Kingdom has one of the highest employment rates in Europe for women (OECD, 2016). Moreover, working hours for men and women in full-time employment are very similar, with an average of 39.1 hours a week for men and 37.5 hours for women (Labour Force Survey, 2016). However, part-time employment is more frequent for British women than men; 38% of the mothers work part-time compared to

7% of the fathers (Labour Force Survey, 2016; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014; Wattis, Standing & Yerkes, 2013). The dual-earner model is therefore prevailing, with a male breadwinner and a part-time female caregiver. An association between "masculinity" and the providing role still remains, particularly among British working class men (Locke, 2016). Similarly, women are still considered the main caregivers, and spend on average five hours more per week on housework and thirteen hours more on childcare than men do (Park et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, the increasing rates of women's employment have been accompanied by a decrease in support for the traditional male breadwinner and female caregiver arrangement, from almost 50% in 1989 to 13% in 2012 (Park et al., 2013). The support for mothers working part-time increased by 17%, from 26% in 1989 to 43% in 2012, being currently the most favourable arrangement (Park et al., 2013).

These changes in women's work patterns and in attitudes towards the appropriate roles for men and women in the workplace have given rise to a social expectation of fathers performing a more active role in their children's lives (Daly, 1996; Locke, 2016; Risman, 1998; Solomon, 2014). Today, more people believe that men and women should share housework and childcare (Park et al., 2013; Sweeting, Bhaskar, Benzeval, Popham, & Hunt, 2014). Parenting roles are increasingly becoming more fluid, with traits associated with mother's and father's roles becoming more exchangeable (Banchefsky & Park, 2016). A higher proportion of fathers also express wishes to spend more time with their children (Aumann, Galinsky, & Matos, 2011).

In line with these cultural changes, over the last decade there has been a policy focus across Europe on fatherhood, including an expansion of paternity and parental leave provision targeted at fathers. Even though the majority of employed fathers take some form of leave when a child is born, only less than 10% take more than ten working days or use flexible work (Banchefsky & Park, 2016; La Valle, Clery & Huerta, 2008; Miller,

2010). Working fathers are afraid that requesting flexible work will mark them as not committed to their jobs, or negatively affect their chances of promotion (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014). In fact, research on perceptions of job applicants reveals that parents were regarded as less committed, agentic and available on the job, than non-parents (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004; Fuegen, Biernat, Haines & Deaux, 2004). Such perceptions were significantly more negative and penalising for women, as mothers were judged less likely to be hired or promoted than fathers or women with no children (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004; Fuegen, Biernat, Haines & Deaux, 2004). Furthermore, research also demonstrates that working mothers are perceived as less competent but warmer than working women; whereas working fathers are perceived as warm but keep being perceived as competent as working men (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004).

1.3 Non-Parental Childcare

Given the large proportion of mothers in employment, non-parental childcare is an essential service that enables them to work or ensures that their children have an equal preparation starting school. Successive policies have resulted in an increase in the total number of childcare places in the UK but at a disproportionate cost (OECD, 2014). Childcare costs in the UK are among the highest in Europe, limiting choices for families (OECD, 2014; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014). The options and constraints of childcare have more impact on families where both parents work, especially parents with working schedules outside the "normal" office hours (Moilanen, May, Räikkönen, Sevón & Laakso, 2016; Rutter, 2015). However, even families where one parent is the primary caregiver rely occasionally on informal childcare (e.g. relatives, babysitting) during weekends, evenings or nights (Rutter & Evans, 2012; Simon, Owen & Hollingworth, 2015; Usdansky & Wolf, 2008). As a result, families might use a combination of different types of childcare arrangements simultaneously (Rutter & Evans, 2012; Simon, Owen & Hollingworth, 2015).

The decision of selecting childcare relies on a number of factors. Parents weigh in their options based on cost, distance and quality of the service (Honig, 2002; Johansen, Leibowitz, Waite, 1996; Leslie, Ettenson, & Cumsille, 2000; Neilsen-Hewett et al., 2014; Seo, 2003; Van Horn, Ramey, Mulvihill, & Newell, 2001). Child's age is also a factor that influences parents' decision when selecting childcare. Research demonstrates that parents of younger children prefer parental care over other forms, since younger children require constant attention. As the child ages more parents choose non-parental care such as children's day care centres (Fuller & Kagan, 2000; Fuller et al., 2002; Han, 2004; Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 2000; Riley & Glass, 2002).

Parents' beliefs and attitudes regarding gender and family roles also influence their decision. Parents with more traditional attitudes tend to use less formal care than the ones with more egalitarian views (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2005). Independently of parents' attitudes, mothers usually have a "bigger say" in the selection process of childcare (Liu, 2015). The use of non-parental childcare, either formal or informal, implies the transportation of the child to and from the childcare provider. Research suggests that even when women work full-time, they still assume the responsibility of transporting the child to and from a childcare provider more than men do (Craig, 2006).

2. Theoretical Accounts of the Division of Family Work

With more people pursuing a career and committing to a family, the struggle to balance it all amplified over the last decades (Allen & Eby, 2015; Jones, Burke & Westman, 2013; Scott & Plagnol, 2012). Several theoretical models have been developed to account for such division of household labour and family roles.

2.1 Economic, Exchange and Structural Models

Economic exchange (Brines, 1994; Greenstein, 2000) or relative resources perspective (Becker, 1981) suggest that the spouse with more external resources (e.g. income, education), has more power to bargain in the decision making process and can

negotiate to do less housework and childcare. According to the economic exchange model, an equal income for husbands and wives imply less discrepancy in the division of household tasks, including childcare, as both spouses have an equal bargaining power (Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010; Sullivan, 2011). On the other hand, the human capital theory (Bergen, 1991; Becker, 1981) proposes that household tasks are assigned to the family member that can better perform them, requiring less time to do so. The task is allocated to the spouse who can maximise its execution. In line with both perspectives, time dedicated to housework decreases when women's employment hours (Brines, 1994; Gershuny & Robinson, 1988; Robinson, 1993; Robinson & Converse, 1972; Sanchez, 1993; Shelton, 1990; Shelton & John, 1996) and education increase (Berardo, Shehan & Leslie, 1987; Bergen, 1991; Brines, 1994; Shelton & John, 1993; South & Spitze, 1994). Consequently, unemployed mothers perform more hours of housework than any other parent group (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2007). Research is not clear on the relation between men's employment hours, education and the amount of time they commit to household labour. While some scholars found working hours to be negatively associated with men's housework hours (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Coverman, 1985; Haddad, 1994; Kamo, 1991; South & Spitze, 1994), others did not find any relationship at all (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Sanchez, 1993; Shelton, 1990; Shelton & John, 1996). Men's education was found to be related to greater time spent in housework by some studies (Berardo, Shehan & Leslie, 1987; Brayfield, 1992; Kamo, 1988; Presser, 1994; Shelton & John, 1996; South & Spitze, 1994). However, other findings revealed the opposite (Aldous, Mulligan, & Bjarnason, 1998).

The structural approach argues that fathers contribute more, when there are greater childcare demands and the better their capacities to respond to them, such as couples' availability to perform the tasks. According to both the structural and relative resources models, husband's (Bonney, Kelley & Levant, 1999; Hook, 2012; Roeters, van der Lippe,

Kluwer, & Raub, 2012) and wife's (Bailey, 1994; Deutsch et al., 1993; Gaunt, 2005; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010) number of employment hours, and the number and age of the children (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Cabrera et al., 2000; Coverman, 1985; Pleck, 2010a) are important in determining share of domestic work. Other structural characteristics, such as father's age (Cabrera et al., 2000) and ethnicity (Pleck, 2010a; Tamis-LeMonda, Kahana-Kalman, & Yoshikawa, 2009) also appear to influence childcare distribution.

Although economic, exchange and structural models explain some patterns in the division of family labour, their gender-neutral nature does not account for the gendered division of housework and childcare that still persists. Mothers do not only spend more time performing childcare, even when both parents work fulltime (Jacobs & Kelley, 2006), but they also provide a different kind of care, meaning the nature of the tasks they perform is different (Craig, 2006). Women are usually responsible for daily routine tasks, usually the most necessary and time consuming ones, whereas men perform infrequent household maintenance and repair chores, and their involvement in housework is regarded as help (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Doucet, 2004; Forste & Fox, 2012; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Bouknik, 2012; Hochschild, 1989). Fathers are also more likely to engage in more recreational activities than other forms of care (Craig 2002, 2006; Lamb, 2010; Starrels 1994). Therefore, it is important to understand not only the amount of time couples dedicate to housework and childcare, but also how they distribute specific tasks.

2.2 Gender Perspective: Interactional Approach to the Construction of Gender

To account for gender inequalities, West and Zimmerman (1987, 2009) introduced the term "doing gender" as an ongoing activity that involves a complex of socially guided interactions that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine "natures". West and Zimmerman (1987) describe gender as a social practice created in a specific situation rather than a pre-existing condition. This approach

emphasises the ongoing daily negotiation that shapes the division of labour, focusing on the effects of situational and interactional pressures rather than structural ones (West & Zimmerman, 2009). Couples are constantly displaying behaviours and attitudes to reinforce what is socially regarded as natural for their gender. According to this approach, women and men exhibit their "femininity" or "masculinity" respectively by adopting gender normative household behaviours. When accounting for paid work, education and earnings, gender is a predictor of the type of tasks and discrepancy of time invested by men and women in housework (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Hall, Walker & Acock, 1995; Kroska, 2003). Therefore, caregiving and housework should not only be recognised for producing goods and services but also gender (Berk, 1985).

Ample research has used the "doing gender" approach to interpret the persistence of gendered behaviours, explaining that these behaviours occur as a way to reproduce existing normative constructions of gender (Bittman et al., 2003; Brines, 1994; Chesley, 2011; Forste & Fox, 2012; Greenstein, 2000; Hook, 2006; Thébaud, 2010; Tichenor, 1999; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Although research keeps focusing on reasons for the persistence of inequalities, a recent trend in the literature argues that the focus should shift to the interactive processes of change (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). The emphasis on parenting not needing to be gendered, highlights how important it is to understand the circumstances and factors that lead to less gendered interactions and even circumstances when gender does not define the individual (Deutsch, 1999, 2007; Risman, 2009). Researchers call for the need to understand and differentiate when egalitarian spouses are "doing" or "undoing" gender in order to allow changes that breakthrough unequal "marital norms" (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). Role reversed parents are interdependently creating equally sharing identities (Deutsch, 1999). They perform social change by not making a gender-based division of roles and resisting the

traditional images of motherhood and fatherhood. By studying these couples, the present research responds to the recent calls to shift the focus from stability to change.

3. Role Reversed Couples: Primary Caregiving Fathers and Breadwinning Mothers

3.1 Occurrence and Practices

The social, cultural and institutional meaning of "good parent" has changed over the last decades (Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Latshaw, 2011; McDonald, Bradley & Guthrie, 2005; Pleck & Pleck, 1997; Yarwood & Locke, 2015). Such shift in cultural meaning and expectations of parenthood allows for couples to decide their childcare arrangements differently. More and more families are reversing roles, with fathers becoming the primary caregiver for their children and mothers the primary breadwinner of the family (Fields, 2003; Labour Force Survey, 2016; Latshaw, 2011). Although those couples are still a small minority, there has been a steady increase in percentage over the last decade. For example, the number of US married fathers who stayed home to care for their children for more than a year has increased from 105,000 in 2002 (Fields, 2003) to 189,000 in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). These numbers substantially underestimate the frequency of primary caregiving fathers as they do not include fathers who care for their children while working part-time (Latshaw, 2011). A similar increase is estimated in the UK, where in 2001 39,000 men stated having one or more pre-school children as their reason for being economically inactive (compared with 1,100,000 women) (Labour Force Survey, 2002). Currently 244,000 economically inactive men in the UK mentioned looking after their family or home as the main reason why they did not work for pay (Labour Force Survey, 2016). However, due to the changes in the range of the response options for economic inactivity on the labour force survey, it is not possible to determine how many of those men are stay-at-home fathers. These numbers could also include men who are caring for a dependent adult, an older or disable relative, or simply looking after

their home. The economic crisis affected the disproportionate some occupation sectors of the UK labour market, which were mainly male dominated professions, such as construction and manufacturing, impacting thousands of working and middle class men.

Some scholars claim that the economic recession played an important part in the rise of role reversed arrangements, as many fathers lost their jobs and became primary caregivers for their families, avoiding the economic burden of childcare services (Allegretto & Lynch, 2010; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Locke, 2016; Scott, 2011).

Accompanying the changes of the labour market was the progress on more inclusive paternity leave policies allowing men to take time to care for their children. Over the last decade, the UK evolved towards a more inclusive parental leave, and recently, making it gender neutral. In 2003 British fathers were entitled to two weeks of paid paternity leave, however last year, parents became eligible to take up to 50 weeks of shared parental leave during their child's first year, allowing more men to take on the role of caregiver.

Research on role re versed couples has demonstrated that the majority of stay-at-home fathers are white, older (Marshall, 1998), well educated, middle class men (Chesley, 2011; Latshaw, 2015; Risman, 1998; Scott, 2011). However, some studies report that minorities or working class families are also reversing roles (Deutsch, 1999; Doucet, 2004; Latshaw, 2015). Families with stay-at-home fathers are less likely to have a pre-school aged child at home than are those with stay-at-home mothers (Marshall, 1998).

Research conducted by Chesley and Flood (2013) demonstrates that stay-at-home fathers spend significantly less time on childcare activities related to play, physical care and secondary care than stay-at-home mothers. The study found that on a daily average, stay-at-home mothers spend 36 minutes playing with their children while stay-at-home fathers spend 23 minutes. On secondary care, meaning when they are caring for a child while doing the primary activities reported, stay-at-home mothers spend seven hours

while stay-at-home fathers spend five hours and 20 minutes. Stay-at-home mothers spend two times more of their daily time on physical care, about one hour, than stay-at-home fathers (Chesley & Flood, 2013). As for total time spent daily with their children, stay-at-home fathers spend six hours and 23 minutes while eight hours and 38 minutes is spent by stay-at-home mothers with their children (Chesley & Flood, 2013). Nonetheless, stay-at-home mothers and stay-at-home fathers spend about the same amount of time a day on education and other household activities (e.g. reading, talking and listening to the child, transportation, doctor's visits, etc) (Chesley & Flood, 2013). In terms of the division of housework, research done in the 90's indicated that stay-at-home mothers did on average two hours and 20 minutes per week more of childcare, housework and volunteer work than stay-at-home fathers (Marshall, 1998).

Role reversed couples appear to have an equal distribution of childcare (Chesley & Flood, 2013; Klenner, 2012; Latshaw, 2015), with some studies demonstrating that primary caregiving fathers do more childcare than their breadwinning wives (Connelly & Kimmel, 2009; Latshaw, 2015; Raley, Bianchi & Wang, 2012). Specifically, Chesley and Flood's (2013) study revealed that stay-at-home fathers spend more time on a daily average, playing with their children and providing secondary care when compared to breadwinning mothers. Therefore, their involvement in the childcare tasks is significantly higher than breadwinning mothers. On the other hand, both parents spend on average the same amount of time on physical care, education and other childcare related activities (e.g. reading, transportation, doctor's visits, etc) (Chesley & Flood, 2013).

According to Latshaw's study (2015), stay-at-home fathers spend a daily average of two hours and a half on meal preparation and tiding up, less than one hour on cleaning and around 20 minutes doing household maintenance. Such results appear to be consistent with stay-at-home fathers' reports of their share of housework, as they claim to do more or an equal amount of a variety of housework tasks (Chesley & Schopp, 2012; Latshaw,

2015). However, other findings suggest that role reversed couples are less equal in terms of their division of housework, as women are mostly responsible for household tasks (Chesley & Flood, 2013; Klenner, 2012; Schneider, 2011).

To better understand role-reversed couples' childcare practices, the current research aims to address the following questions:

Task allocation:

- What are the practices of task allocation entailed by role reversed couples? Do primary caregiving fathers perform similar roles to those of primary caregiving mothers? Are breadwinning mothers involved in childcare in a similar way to breadwinning fathers?
- Can traces of traditional gender segregation be identified in role reversed couples' task allocation? If so, what are the most change-proof aspects of parenting, and what do they teach us about the social prescriptions of motherhood and fatherhood?

Time distribution:

- Do role reversed arrangements mirror those of traditional couples in terms of work and childcare hours? Do primary caregiving fathers invest the same number of hours in work and childcare as primary caregiving mothers?
- Is role reversed parenting achieved through increased or decreased use of non-parental care?

3.2 Constraints and Choices

One of the main differences between diverse family arrangements stems from parents' approaches to work and family choices. In traditional family arrangements, mothers and fathers take opposite directions when trying to balance work and family

constraints. Mothers choose flexible work hours or look for employment with family-supportive environment that will allow them to engage in childcare and housework, focusing their time and effort on family related tasks and activities (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015). Fathers, on the other hand, dedicate more time to work, and look for opportunities to enhance their career such as taking extra hours or promotion opportunities that will provide higher economical security for their family. Conversely, in more egalitarian couples, fathers look for flexible employment hours and family friendly policies that will allow them to dedicate more time to their family, whereas mothers focus on their career and take a secondary role at home (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015). Furthermore, fathers' assumption of the primary caregiving role is done similarly to mothers, by reducing work hours or adopting a more flexible work schedule (Barker et al., 2012).

For many women in the UK, the solution to reconcile work and family demands is to opt for part-time employment or have a career break, becoming the main caregiver for their children (Beauregard, 2007; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014; Tomlinson, 2006; Warren, Pascall & Fox, 2010). The decision to work part-time or have a career break is often seen as reflecting a lower commitment to work (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008; Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson & Siddiqi, 2013), however such perception is not necessarily true (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer & Robinson, 2000; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014). Research demonstrates that women who reduced their working schedule due to family demands or decided to prioritise their children, still remained committed to their job (Bianchi et al., 2000; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014).

Couples usually make such complex decisions together, considering different options for their family (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015). Gender and work status are among the main considerations made by parents when deciding who will assume the caregiver role. The expectations for 'good mothers' is that they will be highly involved in childcare

despite their employment commitments (Johnston & Swanson, 2006; McDonald, Bradley & Guthrie, 2005; Yarwood & Locke, 2015). Therefore, mothers should sacrifice their job to be involved in their children's lives (Yarwood & Locke, 2015). However, parents' preferences for one arrangement over the other are also related to their own characteristics, beliefs and attitudes. For example, highly educated parents are responsible for more intensive care and share tasks more equally (Bonke & Esping-Andersen, 2009).

Research showed that parents' preferences are also heavily influenced by the country's policy and work environment (Barker et al., 2012; Lokteff & Piercy, 2012; Robila, 2014). For example, national policies impact fathers by promoting or overlooking men's roles as fathers and caregivers in their gender equality and social development policies (Barker et al., 2012). Different employment contexts also help shape families' decisions regarding work and family (Beauregard, 2007; Ulrike, 2010). When the workplace provides monetary benefits, full-time working mothers tend to work less; while the provision of benefits in kind influences mothers' decision to work longer hours (Ulrike, 2010). Additionally, more supportive family practices in the workplace, for example employers that provide flexible work hours, influence workers' perceptions of control over their lives (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). The higher those perceptions of control are, the more job satisfaction, less work-family conflict and depression is experienced by employees (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Therefore, situational and structural constrains must not be dismissed as they limit greatly couples' choices and impact their decisions on work and family fields.

Work and family demands are felt mostly by dual-earner and single parents (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001). Lewis and Humbert (2010) argue that even when work-life balance policies exist at the workplace, the assumptions of 'ideal worker' and 'good motherhood' give little flexibility to women. Women must constantly be available and

visible to meet the standards of 'ideal worker' and 'good mothers' by being highly involved in commitment to the family (Lewis & Humbert, 2010).

The struggle to find a healthy work and family balance is often meet by the formation of 1.5 families, where one parent is the full-time worker and the other a part-time worker, being such model one of the most commonly adopted in the UK and the USA (Beauregard, 2007; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014; Tomlinson, 2006; Warren, Pascall & Fox, 2010). In 2001, 37% of British families had a standard 1.5 earner model, meaning a female part-time worker and male full-time worker, it decreased to 31% in 2013 (Connolly, Aldrich, O'Brien, Speight & Poole, 2016). The decrease of the number of 1.5 family model has been accompanied by an increase of dual-household earners and role-reversed couples (Connolly, Aldrich, O'Brien, Speight & Poole, 2016).

As the part-time parent is usually the mother and the full-time worker the father, the work and family balance can be perceived as a gender process (Yarwood & Locke, 2015). Furthermore, due to gender assumptions regarding the division of paid and non-paid work, the struggle is also faced by men, who are becoming more isolated from their family, spending less time at home, as to meet society standards and increasingly requirements for longer working hours (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003).

3.2.1 Subjective perception of choice and reasons for the division of roles. Within the decision to stay at home and become a primary caregiver, men have different perceptions of choice. Research demonstrates that some fathers feel that they intentionally chose their role (Doucet, 2004; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000) while others feel they had no other option, being 'forced' into the role, rather than freely choosing it (Barker et al., 2012; Doucet, 2004; Heppner & Heppner, 2009; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008). Research further shows that the subjective perception of choice has an impact on fathers' involvement in housework and

childcare (Latshaw, 2015; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014). Fathers who are home for longer periods of time or intentionally choose to be home, are more involved in housework and childcare and do not have plans to re-enter the labour market in the near future (Chesley, 2011; Latshaw, 2015). In contrast, fathers who felt 'forced' into the role, participated less in housework and performed less tasks that have a traditional 'feminine connotation' (Latshaw, 2015; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014).

Choice is also a key factor influencing mothers' positive relationship with their children that appears to go beyond mothers' employment status (Mathur, 2001). Both working and non-working women who chose to be primary caregivers have a more positive relation with their children than mothers who feel "forced" into the caregiving role and would prefer returning to fulltime employment (Mathur, 2001).

It is important to examine role reversed arrangements in order to understand the reasons and circumstances that lead parents to adopt opposing roles to societies' expectations. Relatively few studies have focused specifically on role reversed couples and explored the motives for adopting norm-violating roles (Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien, & Rochlen, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). Based on couples' accounts, the literature has identified several reasons that lead couples to opt for a family structure where the father is the main caregiver. The most cited ones are economic reasons, wife's greater income or career potential (Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien, & Rochlen, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). In situations where wives have the higher income or the potential to earn more, accomplish higher growth and success in their career, couples opt for prioritising women's career progression and men assume the role of primary caregivers and either reduce their working hours or take a break from their career (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Merla, 2008). Economic reasons are

somewhat in the middle of the choice spectrum, as they can be either interpreted by the couple as the more reasonable option even if that does not translate their main preference, or they can be seen as a 'conscious choice' that reflects couple's intention (Barker et al., 2012; Doucet, 2004; Heppner & Heppner, 2009; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008). Such reasons are also usually accompanied by a fathers' dissatisfaction in their job, as a lot of men include their lack of motivation or joy for the job as another factor that influenced their decision in such direction (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). Alternatively, fathers' sense of success and accomplishment "allowed" them to take a break and dedicate more time to their families (Merla, 2008).

Another main reason that has been pointed out by different scholars refers to health or labour market constraints (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Kramer, Kelly, & McCulloch, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; West et al., 2009). Facing a chronic disease or an illness that prevents the husband from work can drive men to undertake the role of primary carer for their children. Labour market constrains, most frequently unemployment, also reduce fathers' ability to continue working and change couples' social and financial situation, presenting either an opportunity or a valid option for fathers to transfer their role from workers to carers (Deutsch, 2009; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Kramer, Kelly, & McCulloch, 2013; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). Both factors are usually allied with limited options for non-parental childcare, expensive childcare services or limited places; that families either cannot afford or would require one parent's salary to be allocated to childcare payments (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009).

Some spouses indicate their partner's influence and one parent being more focused on family caregiving needs as reasons that influenced their decision (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Kramer, Kelly, McCulloch, 2013; Rochlen,

McKelley & Whittaker, 2010). Decisions for fathers to become a primary caregiver are made by both parents, therefore fathers' participation in the family domain is also dependent on mothers' beliefs and attitudes toward the appropriate involvement of fathers in childcare (Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010). Research reveals that mothers' incentive and encouragement of their partners to stay home and care for their children is an influential component in parents' decision (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Merla, 2008). Fathers who have support from their partners are more likely to become stay-at-home parents than those who's partners do not see caregiving and childrearing appropriate or fit for a man (Merla, 2008). Also, men with lower "traditional" masculinity appear to be more influenced by their spouses in the decision to stay home and report greater satisfaction with their caregiving role (Fischer & Anderson, 2012).

The decision of becoming the primary caregiver can be shaped by couples' perceptions of their ability as parents (Chesley, 2011). Referenced partner fit, meaning that one partner is better suited for the role, and the importance of having one at-home parent were also identified as reasons why couples choose a non-traditional arrangement (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien & Rochlen, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Waller, 2009). In some role reversed arrangements, couples mentioned father's greater attributes that made him better fit for the role, for example, being more patient with the children or being better at executing caregiving tasks (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien & Rochlen, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Waller, 2009).

The importance of raising their own children and not relying on 'strangers' to do so, adding to the lack of extended family to rely on, can also either be mentioned as the reason or accompanies other reasons mentioned for reversing roles (Deutsch, 1999; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). Parents defend that having one parent at home allows them to address the child's individual needs, tailoring their responses to the child's

characteristics. Such beliefs translate into parents' wish to be present and involved in important developmental landmarks and achievements of their kids, and the desire to build a solid, trusting relationship between them (Deutsch, 1999; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). Partner's influences or partner fit would theoretically be more associated with a higher degree of freedom, as choosing who adopts the role of primary caregiver or primary breadwinner is done by a 'natural' match between the traits, identities or characteristics of each role and both partners (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien & Rochlen, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Waller, 2009).

Couples' decision process seems to rely on the consideration of a combination of factors and variables and to some extent accommodates personal preferences or characteristics. However, structural characteristics and personal or professional circumstances may limit couples' ability to choose freely the role that suits them (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Kramer, Kelly, & McCulloch, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; West et al., 2009). The relevance of social and economic demands cannot be ignored and these are in most cases part of the equation. Childcare services in the UK are among the most expensive in Europe, costing British families 26.6% of their income, representing then a constraint in families' abilities to freely choose their family and work arrangements (OECD, 2014; Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014). Most families struggle to afford having their children in childcare fulltime, consequently when and if circumstances change families are faced with choices that do not always reflect their preferences (Barker et al., 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Heppner & Heppner, 2009; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008). Interestingly, research done with role reversed couples reveals that even though fathers recognised that becoming the primary caregiver was not really their choice, some reported enjoying the decision and increasingly becoming more involved in

their child's life (Barker et al., 2012; Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007). Associated with such switch of roles, mothers also address their choice or lack of thereof, with some degree of guilt for not being able to spend a lot of time with their family and caring for their child (Chesley, 2011; Chesley & Flood, 2013; Deutsch, 1999).

3.2.2 Satisfaction with the division and preference for change. Being a primary caregiver involves an ambivalent range of emotions and plans for the future (Latshaw, 2011). Primary caregiving mothers' and fathers' experiences are very similar; both express tedium, boredom, the feeling of being undervalued or sometimes losing their patience (Barker et al., 2012; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Latshaw, 2011; Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Schmidt, 2014). On the other hand, caregiving fathers' greater participation in their children's lives transforms their valuing of caregiving and parenting role (Barker et al., 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2006). Due to higher involvement, stay-at-home fathers experience a closer relationship with their children and an appreciation of the opportunity to spend time care daily for their children (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Rushing & Powell, 2014). Furthermore, primary caregiving fathers and their children appear to have a more positive emotional tone together during play than non-primary caregiving fathers (Lewis et al., 2009).

A large body of research indicates that stay-at-home fathers report feeling isolated, lonely and unsupported (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005; Bridges, Etaugh, & Barnes-Farrell, 2002; Helford, Stewart, Gruys, & Frank, 2012; Riggs, 1998; Rochlen, McKelly, Suizzo, & Scaringi, 2008; Rochlen et al., 2010; Whelan & Lally, 2002; Zimmerman, 2000) and a lack of fathers' specific resources and activities available (Locke, 2016). Fathers report their negative experiences going as far as suffering stigma from mothers at the playground, attributing such attitudes to ignorance, religious views or gender norm beliefs (Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, there is a possibility that such attitudes might be changing as a more recent study found that stay-at-home fathers felt supported by their social networks (Solomon, 2014).

Primary caregiving mothers also face challenges and conflict, expressing guilt for not doing enough for their children and at the same time guilt for not using their education and skills to explore their professional potential (Deutsch, 1999; Rubin & Wooten, 2007). On the other hand, working mothers' experiences vary according to their work status; fulltime employed mothers report not having enough time for their family, while part-time employed mothers report their choice as making career sacrifices due to not having full engagement in the workforce (Johnston & Swanson, 2006). Different work choices also translate into different ways mothers describe themselves as caregivers (Ba, 2014; Christopher, 2012; Garey, 1999; Johnston & Swanson, 2006, 2007). Stay-at-home mothers describe themselves as available, while part-time mothers highlight how well they communicate with their children, and full-time working mothers emphasise the empowerment of their children and how that impacts their self-esteem (Johnston & Swanson, 2006, 2007). Higher income is associated with more gratitude from the partner, independent of gender, however more admiration is given to women than to men for their income (Deutsch, Roksa & Meeske, 2003).

Some scholars have found that the role of primary caregiver is perceived as temporary or a short-term by fathers who assume it, due to their expectation to return to work as soon as their children are old enough to go to school (Latshaw, 2011; Solomon, 2014). The length that fathers assume the role of primary caregivers varies; some men become primary caregivers for their children while taking paternity leave, others assume the role until their children go to school and others become primary caregivers as a response to specific circumstances, e.g. help partners' career development (Barker et al., 2012). Stay-at-home fathers express higher concerns about returning to work when

compared to stay-at-home mothers (Helford, Stewart, Gruys, & Frank, 2012). However, they also display less concern about their career progression than women in the same situation (Helford, Stewart, Gruys, & Frank, 2012). Whereas primary caregiving fathers acknowledge themselves as the caregiver in their family (Solomon, 2014), breadwinning women seem to struggle to recognize and identify with their providing role (Chesley & Schopp, 2012).

Finally, while women's sense of worth appears to extend to a variety of domains, men's appears to be more attached to work (Deutsch, 1999). Holding on to their work identity by working part-time is a way in which fathers cope with caregiving and feel comfortable when discussing it with their peers and families (Barker et al., 2012). A lot of the research on stay-at-home fathers investigates how men performing a non-traditional role still remain connected to their masculine identity by engaging in activities perceived as 'masculine' (Doucet, 2004, 2006; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Latshaw, 2011, 2015; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Scott, 2011). A range of activities have been described, from taking on some part-time paid work to activities such as fixing the car, repairing around the house, or hobbies such as sports (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Doucet 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Eagly, Eastwick, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008). They also engage in 'masculine' activities with their children such as tumble play, coach sports' practices, etc' (Fisher & Anderson, 2012; Pleck, 2010b). Scholars suggest that stay-at-home fathers redefine their sense of masculinity by rejecting conventional gender roles (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Rochlen, et al., 2008).

To enhance our understanding of role-reversed parents' constraints and choices, the following questions were addressed:

- To what extent do role-reversed parents feel that they intentionally chose their role or that they were forced into it? Compared to traditional parents,

do role-reversed parents have a higher or lower subjective perception of choice?

- How do traditional and role-reversed parents describe the reasons that lead them to their division of roles? Do these groups differ in their reasons, and do parents with high subjective perceptions of choice give different reasons for their division of roles than parents with low perception of choice?
- To what extent are role-reversed parents satisfied with their division of roles or would prefer to change it? Compared to traditional parents, do role-reversed parents have a higher or lower desire to change the division of roles in the near future?

3.3 Social Psychological Characteristics: Attitudes, Identities and Ambivalent Sexism

Couples' decisions regarding the allocation of family and work roles are made together, involving a lot of deliberation and analysing different aspects and projecting different outcome scenarios. Even though situational, economic and structural constraints constitute major influences on couples' decision process, parenting and work arrangements choices are not independent of their ideologies, values and attitudes (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014). Thus, work-family arrangements are not purely a consequence of structural barriers but seem to be driven by social psychological mechanisms, as parents facing the same constraints choose in different directions (Seiz Puyuelo, 2014). Research has demonstrated that on the decision making process, social psychological factors are prioritised over economic, demographic and institutional ones (Hakim 1996, 2000). Economic factors in particular seem to be

considered after social factors and values are established (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds & Alldred, 2003).

Several social psychological mechanisms have been identified as playing a role in parents' allocation of responsibilities. Research suggests that parents' participation in childcare is affected by social psychological characteristics such as gender attitudes (Coltrane, 1996; Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Gaunt, 2006), parenting identity (Fox & Bruce, 2001; Gaunt & Scott, 2014), essentialist beliefs (Gaunt, 2006), maternal gatekeeping (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008) and value priorities (Gaunt, 2005). The role of these social psychological mechanisms will be discussed in more detail below.

3.3.1 Gender attitudes. The socialisation of men traditionally involves adopting roles related to agency and power, while women are socialised to adopt more social or communal roles, to care and worry more for others (Bem, 1974) and make those traits more central to their gender role (Fillo, Simpson, Rholes & Kohn, 2015; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). The most extensively studied theoretical framework, *the gender attitudes model*, argues that men's and women's beliefs regarding gender drive the division of family roles (Deutsch et al., 1993; Hochschild, 1989). The relationship between egalitarian beliefs about gender and paternal involvement in childcare is not clear though, and different studies show mixed results. Several studies found that mothers' (Beitel & Parke, 1998; Gaunt, 2006) and fathers' (Brayfield, 1992; Bulanda, 2004; Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Deutsch et al., 1993; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Hofferth, 2003; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Karre, 2015; Riina & Feinberg, 2012) egalitarian attitudes are related to fathers' participation in childcare and housework. Fathers with more egalitarian beliefs regarding gender are more involved in childcare and housework tasks than those with more traditional beliefs. On the other hand, mothers with more traditional gender ideologies are more involved in childcare and housework than their spouses (Beitel &

Parke, 1998; Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Gaunt, 2006; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009). Yet other studies failed to support this relation (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Crouter et al., 1987; Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012; Thompson & Walker, 1989).

Gender beliefs and attitudes are also influenced by other factors such as upbringing, education and income level. Highly educated fathers (Karre, 2015) and higher-income families are less prone to endorse traditional gender attitudes, especially in families where the woman has the higher income (Doucet, 2013). In turn, men with a higher education have greater involvement in childcare and housework activities (Aldous et al., 1998; Brines, 1994; Bulanda, 2004; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001) as do men who were raised by a working mother and an involved father (Gupta, 2006).

Interestingly, egalitarian attitudes have a greater effect on childcare than on housework, which implies that fathers are expected to have a greater involvement in their child's lives but that is associated with direct care of the child rather than higher participation in household labour (Askari, Liss, Erchull, Staebell & Axelson, 2010). A study found that gender ideologies also influence specific responsibility tasks, explicitly related to child's health care; demonstrating that fathers with less traditional gender ideologies were more involved in their child's health care (Zvara, Schoppe-Sullivan, Dush, 2013) and demonstrated more paternal warmth (Hofferth, 2003). Fathers with traditional gender ideologies also seem to be more vulnerable to maternal gatekeeping behaviours (Zvara, Schoppe-Sullivan, Dush, 2013) and structural constrains such as working hours (McGill, 2014; Karre, 2015). Nonetheless, even though traditional fathers are less involved in childcare, they still express willingness to be more involved and spend more time with their children (Karre, 2015).

Research demonstrates that role reversed couples hold more egalitarian ideologies than traditional couples (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Rooks, 2012). Families who do not

adopt gender stereotypes or follow conventional gender norms exhibited more egalitarian division of roles, and had a more flexible view of gender and higher awareness of personal choice (Blume & Blume, 2003; Risman, 1998). With regards to attitudes and values, stay-at-home fathers are less likely to endorse traditional values (e.g. tradition, moderation, being devout) (Rooks, 2012) and traditional gender role attitudes (Fischer & Anderson, 2012) than working fathers.

3.3.2 Biological essentialism. Like other groups in society, families construct and reveal through interactions their implicit gender ideologies and individual understanding of the dominant gender discourse (Bem, 1993; Coltrane, 1998). Bem (1993) proposed three gender lenses to comprehend the construction of gender: *androcentrism*, *gender polarization* and *biological essentialist*. *Androcentrism* denotes the understanding of behaviours of males and females by using males as the standard and the norm for comparison, implying a superiority of the male experience. *Gender polarization* refers to masculinity and femininity as opposite constructs in both far ends of a spectrum, implying this idea that what is feminine is not masculine and vice-versa. Associated with this polarised dualistic concept of gender is the expectation that if a person is feminine in one domain, they should be feminine in all other domains (Bem, 1995; Whitley, 2001).

According to Bem (1993), *biological essentialism* rationalises androcentrism and gender polarisation by treating it as inevitable consequences of the intrinsic biological natures of women and men. Consequently, biological essentialism perpetuates a concept of inevitability of different treatment, expectations and roles for men and women and naturalises gender inequalities (Bem, 1993). Essentialist perceptions have not only been applied to justify gender but also racial or minority inequalities as well, portraying different groups as having unchangeable characteristics (Haslam, Rothschild & Ernst, 2002; Holtz & Wagner, 2009; Kahn & Fingerhut, 2011; Verkuyten, 2003). However,

gender still remains the category where most essentialist perceptions are applied to justify dissimilarities.

According to biological essentialist beliefs, pregnancy and lactation generate a stronger, intuitive drive in women to nurture and their ability to parent. Men's lack of such experiences, imply therefore, an absence of such primitive drive to care for their children (Bem, 1993). Such perceptions suggest that women are seen through with more biological essentialism lenses. Essentialist perceptions increase if women's physical changes as a consequence of motherhood occur (e.g. hormone levels, breastfeeding, etc) (Park, Banchefsky & Reynolds, 2015; Park, Smith, & Correll, 2010). Research demonstrates that women who did not experience physical changes, such as adoptive mothers, were viewed as having less essentialist characteristics than women who did (Park, Banchefsky & Reynolds, 2015). Nevertheless, adoptive mothers were still perceived as having more essentialist traits than adoptive fathers (Park, Banchefsky & Reynolds, 2015).

Biological essentialist perceptions assume gender differences beyond the physical characteristics, assuming that men and women are born with different predispositions for different roles (Rudman & Glick, 2008). Scholars argue that the beliefs regarding men and women's differences in society are far bigger than the average differences between the sexes (Bem, 1993; Diekman, Goodfriend & Goodwin, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Such differences become a "reality" when people behave according to their gender and not due to their "biology" (Bem, 1993; Rudman & Glick, 2008).

A recent study by Park, Banchefsky and Reynolds (2015) found that when analysing mother as a category, it was evaluated as having distinct characteristics, such as being more natural, durable and meaningful than the category of father. Mothers were also more characterised by essentialist dimensions and being more similar to each other, sharing more of the same goals and values, than were fathers. Additionally, when

compared to people without children, mothers were seen as more distinct and separate from women who are not mothers, than fathers were from men without children (Park, Banchefsky & Reynolds, 2015). Nurturance compared to other parenting behaviours seems to be significantly perceived as a gender prescriptive trait for women and justified by using more genetic than individual differences (Cole, Jayaratne, Cecchi, Feldbaum & Petty, 2007).

Compared to women, men seem to evoke more genetic explanations for gender differences in nurturance behaviours than women do (Cole, Jayaratne, Cecchi, Feldbaum & Petty, 2007) and higher essentialist perceptions are related to higher sexist beliefs for men (Morton et al., 2009). In Britain, working class men hold higher essentialist perceptions, believing that parenting comes natural to women and men require to learn (Locke, 2016). Essentialist perceptions of mothers as parents are related to the idea that women struggle more than men to concurrently be successful professionals and parents (Park, Banchefsky & Reynolds, 2015). Additionally, the more men were exposed to essentialist beliefs, the higher was their support for discriminatory practices toward women (Morton et al., 2009).

As couples view their natural abilities and predisposition for parenthood differently, they consider mothers to be more capable and 'naturally' better as parents (Deutsch, 1999; Lakoff, 1996). Couples' perceptions of biological differences and their implications seem to be used to justify their division of childcare (Deutsch, 1999). Families with less essentialist perceptions believe that men and women are essentiality similar regarding their characteristics and roles as spouses and parents (Lakoff, 1996). On the contrary, families with more essentialist perceptions see men and women as essentially different in nature and predispositions, with parents having complementary roles regarding childcare and financial provision (Lakoff, 1996). Gaunt's study (2006) demonstrated that spouses' essentialist perceptions of parenthood explain their choices

concerning the allocation of childcare responsibilities. Parents with essentialist perceptions have a less egalitarian division of childcare, consequently women spend more time and perform more tasks and limit fathers' participation (Gaunt, 2006). Fathers' essentialist beliefs influence their involvement in nurturing possibly decreasing their engagement in such behaviour towards their children (Riina & Feinberg, 2012). Stay-at-home fathers seem to believe that men are equally capable of parenting, possessing less essentialist beliefs than working fathers (Solomon, 2014).

As biological essentialism relies on the concept of a feature beyond someone's control, such perceptions are possibly harder to change than other beliefs regarding gender roles. Consequently, it creates a barrier to equal parenting, as the possibility of both parents being equality 'capable' is not even considered.

3.3.3 Parental and work identities. *Identity theory* (Stryker, 1968, 1980, 2008) explains behaviour in terms of the self and society, providing a micro-sociological account for individual role-related behaviours. According to the theory, different expectations are associated with different social roles, and identities are internalised role expectations together with the meanings that someone links to them (Stryker 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Role identities are those self-labelled multiple positions occupied by someone in their lives that contain different meanings attached, as they correspond to the variety of roles someone assumes in their lives (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For example, being a father, husband, friend or lawyer, can be included into someone's role identities.

Identity theory also provides an explanation for why people perform particular roles more than others (Merolla, Serpe, Stryker & Schultz, 2012). The theory suggests that individuals have multiple identities organised in a hierarchy according to their importance. Identity is defined as the likelihood that an individual will invoke a given identity in particular situations or across situations (Merolla, Serpe, Stryker, & Schultz,

2012; Stryker, 1980, 2008), while identity centrality is defined as the importance one attributes to an identity, meaning how central certain parts of the self are (Rosenberg, 1979). Identity theory assumes that more salient and central identities guide behaviour to a greater extent than less salient and central identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Therefore, even if people have the same role identities, they might behave differently in a similar situation due to different salience of such identity. Thus, the theory predicts that more time and effort will be dedicated to enactment of an identity with higher salience and centrality.

In line with these predictions, research shows that the salience of parenting identity predicts fathers' (Adamsons & Pasley, 2016; Fox & Bruce, 2001; Gaunt & Scott, 2014) and mothers' (Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Nuttbrock & Freudiger, 1991) involvement in childcare. Research further shows that a more salient work identity is associated with more time invested at work (Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy & Hannum, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Rothbard & Edwards, 2003) and negatively related with time spent with family (Bagger, Li & Gutek, 2008; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Greenhaus, Peng & Allen, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Stay-at-home fathers seem to value less their work or a breadwinner identity than breadwinning fathers (Solomon, 2014). On the other hand, family identity salience is related with lower time invested in work (Greenhaus, Peng & Allen, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2008) and can generate greater commitment to one's partner (Burke & Stets, 1999). Family identity is also related to work decisions; a person with a more salient family identity weighs in family factors more when making work related decisions (Greenhaus, Peng, & Allen, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell, 2012).

3.3.4 Maternal gatekeeping. *Maternal gatekeeping* is generally defined in terms of attitudes and behaviours that discourage a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting fathers' parenting efforts and access to their children

(Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003). Several studies have stressed the influence of this dynamic factor, showing the importance of mother's views and behaviours in facilitating or inhibiting the father's involvement in child care (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; Nuttbrock & Freudiger, 1991). Maternal gatekeeping can be explained as a way to provide women with power and self-esteem, as home and childrearing are usually areas where women can have a powerful role associated with privilege and admiration. Allen and Hawkins (1999) argued that this occurs because women usually work for lower wages, in lower status professions that can be unrewarding.

Different dimensions of maternal gatekeeping were recognised (Allen & Hawkins, 1999), namely *standards and responsibilities*, *maternal identity validation* and *differentiated family roles*. The standards and responsibilities dimension refers to the mothers' monopolised behaviour over the responsibility for the child, translating into her performing the majority of tasks as she perceives herself to hold higher standards (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Gaunt, 2008). Maternal identity validation denotes a need for positive appraisal of the maternal role, while the dimension of differentiated family roles refers to gender ideologies related to what is expected to be done by men and women (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Gaunt, 2008).

Research has demonstrated that higher maternal gatekeeping is associated with lower father involvement (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, Sokolowski, 2008; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; McBride, et al., 2005; Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, Mangelsdorf & Sokolowski, 2008). Specifically, mother's high standards predicted lower father involvement (Gaunt, 2008), and maternal identity validation was associated with mothers' higher involvement in childcare (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, Sokolowski, 2008; Gaunt, 2008; McBride et al., 2005).

Although maternal gatekeeping is usually perceived as a negative attitude and behaviour, some scholars argue that it can also include positive aspects, as gatekeeping behaviours can facilitate fathers' involvement (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown & Szewczyk-Sokolowski, 2008). Furthermore, it is important to understand that gatekeeping behaviours are not necessarily deliberate; mothers are often unconscious of their gatekeeping and the consequences associated with such behaviours (Gaunt, 2008).

Maternal gatekeeping behaviours can also take place even when the mother is not physically present, by the dictation and control of fathers' activity with the child; or be manifested indirectly by controlling parenting decisions and information regarding the child (e.g. only sharing a small amount of the information gathered concerning child's routine, health and care) (Hauser, 2012). Primary breadwinning mothers with stay-at-home partners exert some form of gatekeeping by organising activities before leaving for work, and persist in holding on to some form of control over the household (Hauser, 2012). Such gatekeeping behaviours are not related with inhibiting fathers' direct involvement and care but rather the persistence to orchestrate the tasks related to responsibility and management (Hauser, 2012). However, breadwinning women are able and willing to let go of maternal gatekeeping behaviours, allowing their at-home partners to be fully involved in childcare (Pruett, 1987).

3.3.5 Ambivalent sexism. Sexism differs from other forms of prejudice due to its multifaceted nature that reflects the interdependence and complex relations between men and women (Glick & Fiske, 2011). *Ambivalent sexism theory* (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1999) identifies two dimensions of prejudice in the relationships between men and women, hostile and benevolent sexism. The first is defined as a hostility towards women who do not fit into conventional roles considered appropriate for their gender, while portraying male dominance as natural and expected (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For example, "*Many women are actually seeking special favours, such as hiring policies that favour them over*

men, under the guise of asking for equality". Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, views women as performing conservative and restricted roles but highlights a positive tone, eliciting prosocial feelings or behaviours (Glick & Fiske, 1996). "*Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess*" or "*Women should be cherished and protected by men*" are examples of benevolent sexist attitudes. Because of its positive tone, benevolent sexism can be less recognisable as prejudice and therefore remains unchallenged (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). However, it should not be interpreted as positive but instead considered as precarious, since it is originated in traditional stereotypes and reflects a patriarchal social structure (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). It can have negative consequences for women by legitimising male dominance and justifying traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1997).

The complexity of relationships and interactions between men and women encompasses beliefs of such ambivalent nature. For example, men compete with women in the labour market, although for a lot of the same men, providing for the women they love is a very central and relevant part of their lives to which much time and effort is dedicated (Glick & Fiske, 2011).

The theory further suggests that similar ambivalence characterises attitudes toward men (Glick & Fiske, 1999). In this case, hostile attitudes refer to the negative attitudes and resentment toward men's predominant power and status in society. For example, "*When men act to "help" women, they are often trying to prove they are better than women*". Benevolent attitudes, however, might have a more positive tone of nurturance towards men and relate to an admiration for men's higher status and beliefs in men's superior abilities (Glick & Fiske, 1999). For example, "*Even if both members of a couple work, the woman ought to be more attentive to taking care of her man at home*".

Research done in different nations also demonstrates that ambivalent sexism and ambivalent attitudes toward men are correlated, and such attitudes are found across

cultures, predicting national indices of gender inequality (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001; Glick et al., 2000; Glick et al., 2004). Ambivalent sexism is also related with preference of traits and roles in a romantic relationship. Studies have demonstrated that men's benevolent sexism is associated with favouring traditional female characteristics and values (Chen, Fiske & Lee, 2009; Good & Sanchez, 2009; Thomae & Houston, 2016) and predicted men's inclination to provide for women (Shnabel, Bar-Anan, Kende, Bareket & Lazar, 2016). Complementary, women's benevolent sexism is related to preference towards traditional male characteristics, such as being the financial provider in the family (Chen, Fiske & Lee, 2009; Thomae & Houston, 2016; Travaglia, Overall & Sibley, 2009), as well as, a preference for dependency oriented behaviours (Shnabel, Bar-Anan, Kende, Bareket & Lazar, 2016).

Research has also shown that ambivalent sexist attitudes moderate reactions towards non-conforming gender roles (Gaunt, 2013; Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001; Glick, Wilkerson & Cuffe, 2015; McBride et al., 2005). In line with the theory, research demonstrates that hostile sexism is associated with negative perceptions of female breadwinners while benevolent sexism is associated with positive perceptions of stay-at-home mothers (Gaunt, 2013; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001; Glick, Wilkerson & Cuffe, 2015). With regards to ambivalent attitudes toward stay-at-home fathers, hostile attitudes toward men relate to more positive attitudes, while benevolent attitudes toward men are associated with negative attitudes to stay-at-home fathers (Gaunt, 2013). However, research also found that lower hostility toward men was a significant predictor of women's support for father's involvement (McBride et al., 2005).

Based on the literature reviewed in this chapter, two main hypotheses were developed to address the social psychological mechanisms underlying role reversed couples' choices:

- *Practices and Related Identities:* The salience and centrality of parental and work identities will be related to role rather than gender; the primary caregivers will have more salient and central parental identities regardless of gender, and primary breadwinners will have more salient and central work identities regardless of gender.
- *Social psychological Characteristics:* Compared with the participants in traditional division of roles, participants who maintain role-reversed arrangements will express more egalitarian gender ideologies, lower essentialist perceptions, and lower tendency to endorse ambivalent sexist attitudes. Women in such arrangements will exhibit lower maternal gatekeeping tendencies.

3.4 Role Reversing: Consequences for Couples' Parenting Satisfaction, Marital Quality and Personal Well-being

Despite the growing amount of research on role reversed couples, little is known about the impact of couples' non-traditional choices on their satisfaction with parenting, relationship quality, well-being and life satisfaction.

Satisfaction with parenting. Parents usually exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction with their family life than non-parents (Hill, 2005; Rogers & White, 1998). Being a parent requires the learning of new behaviours and skills that allow for effectively caring for a child (Ferketich & Mercer, 1994). The more parents feel like they master such behaviours and skills, the more satisfied they are with parenting (Ferketich & Mercer, 1994; Hudson, Elek & Fleck, 2001). First-time parents report an increasing parenting satisfaction over time (Hudson, Elek & Fleck, 2001). Mothers are usually faster in developing confidence in their parenting skills and their parenting satisfaction

increases at a faster rate in the first months of the child's life compared to fathers (Hudson, Elek, & Fleck, 2001; Watson, Watson, Wetzel, Bader, & Talbot, 1995).

Locke (2016) points out an important distinction between the quality of the relationship between fathers and their children as potentially more relevant than the amount of time spent together. It appears that for men with more salient parenting role and greater involvement in childcare, the time spent on childcare tasks is related to parenting satisfaction (Shreffler, Meadows & Davis, 2011). Furthermore, stay-at-home fathers tend to express closeness to their children and refer to parenting in gender neutral terms (Solomon, 2014; Scott, 2011), expressing gratification for being able to see their children reach developmental milestones and an appreciation of their emotional lives (Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008; Scott, 2011).

Overall, the ability to balance work and family roles is associated with less parenting stress and higher parenting satisfaction (Malone, 2011; Shreffler, Meadows & Davis, 2011), and parenting satisfaction appears to be associated with marital satisfaction (Elek, Hudson & Bouffard, 2003).

Marital relationship satisfaction. Research demonstrates that parenting practices are related to parents' relationship satisfaction (Linville, et al., 2010). The share of housework and its perceived fairness can have an effect on couples' and marital satisfaction. The more time spent by women performing housework is associated with lower relationship quality (Blair, 1993; Grote, Frieze, & Stone, 1996). On the other hand, research suggests that father's involvement contributes to mothers' and fathers' and marital satisfaction (Holland & McElwain, 2013; Lee & Doherty, 2007; Schober, 2013; Stevens, Kiger & Riley, 2001). In general, highly involved fathers appear to have more stable marriages, due to wife's satisfaction with their relationship (Kalmijn, 1999).

Perceptions and expectations of housework and childcare distribution are predictors and also moderate couples' marital quality and satisfaction (Adamsons, 2013;

Forste & Fox, 2012; Mencarini & Sironi, 2012; Pina & Bengtson 1993; Ruppanner, 2008). Findings suggest that husband's housework hours mean more to a wife's perceptions of fairness than her own (Baxter 2000; DeMaris & Longmore, 1996; Ruppanner, 2008). Greater gendered division of housework is associated with women's diminished sense of fairness and linked with lower marital quality (Lavee & Katz, 2002).

Although women in traditional partnerships report higher family satisfaction compared to those in non-traditional ones, the latter experience less incongruence between their attitudes and actual behaviour regarding the division of housework (Forste & Fox, 2012). Women's family satisfaction and marital quality might be moderated by expectations and perceptions of their partners' involvement in childcare and housework. Traditional women express higher gratitude and praise when their partners contribute to housework or childcare, as such is perceived as extraordinary (Lavee & Katz, 2002). Egalitarian women, on the other hand, expect their partners to participate equally in housework and childcare, perceiving their involvement as regular (Lavee & Katz, 2002). Consequently, the perception of an unfair division of housework and childcare seems to affect to a greater extent marital quality of egalitarian women than traditional women (Greenstein, 1996).

Higher egalitarian beliefs and equal division of roles are associated with greater marital quality (Amato & Booth, 1995; Amato, Johnson, Booth, & Rogers, 2003). Specifically, men with more egalitarian gender roles and values have higher marital satisfaction (Faulkner, Davey & Davey, 2005; Keizer & Komter, 2015). Stay-at-home fathers, specifically, report average or above average relationship satisfaction (Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2008). When comparing couples with different arrangements, traditional and role reversed couples report equal levels of marital satisfaction (Zimmerman, 2000). Zimmerman (2000) explains such results based on couples, within their arrangement, sharing the same family values and similar levels of

satisfaction with their childcare arrangement, as couples' similarity in ideologies and values is related to higher marital satisfaction (Arránz Becker,2013; Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000; Gaunt, 2006; Gonzaga, Campos, & Bradbury, 2007; Gonzaga, Carter & Buckwalter, 2010).

Life satisfaction, well-being and self-esteem. Parenting practices are related to parents' well-being (Linville, et al., 2010). The more time spent by women performing housework is associated with lower well-being (Des Rivieres-Pigeon, Saurel-Cubizolles, & Romito, 2002). On the contrary, research suggests that father's involvement contributes to mothers' and fathers' satisfaction and well-being (Hawkins & Belsky, 1989; Knoester, Petts, & Eggebeen, 2007; Levy-Shiff, 1994; Pleck, 2010b; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Schindler, 2010).

Work-family conflict and long working hours are negatively related with employees' well-being (Dilworth, 2004; Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Hughes & Parkes, 2007; Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002; Mauno, Kinnunen & Feldt, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shirom, 1997). Nonetheless, work and employment are associated with higher well-being (Pavot & Diener, 2008) whereas unemployment is linked to lower self-esteem (Sheeran, Abrams & Orbell, 1995; Winefield, Tiggemann & Winefield, 1992) and happiness (Frey & Sturzer, 2000). Employment seems to affect men's well-being in particular (Clark, 2003; Gerlach & Stephan, 1996; Gulliford, Shannon, Taskila, Wilkins, Tod & Bevan, 2014). Higher life satisfaction is associated with higher earnings (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Easterlin, 1995; Lamu & Olsen, 2016; Rojas, 2011; Sacks, Stevenson & Wolfers, 2012), while lower socioeconomic dissimilarity between spouses seems to decrease life satisfaction (Keizer & Komter, 2015).

Contrary to popular belief, participating in multiple roles is related to higher energy (Barnett & Hyde, 2001), greater well-being, self-esteem and life satisfaction

(Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer & King, 2002; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). Performing a high salient role, work or family related, is related to less exhaustion and more energy boost in contrast with a role with lower salience (Ten Brummelhuis & Lautsch, 2016). Higher satisfaction with a role is also associated with greater life satisfaction and lower perceived stress (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Finally, men who are satisfied with their role report higher levels of self-esteem, while lower levels of self-esteem appear to be related to lower involvement in childcare, lower well-being and marital satisfaction (Berman & Pedersen, 1987). Men who hold traditional gender ideologies experience emotional exhaustion the more time they dedicate to childcare tasks (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). Few studies have been done analysing the consequences of reversing roles on couples' well-being, life and relationship satisfaction. One study revealed that stay-at-home fathers report, average or above average, levels of well-being and life satisfaction (Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2006).

In line with such results, it can be argued that even more relevant than egalitarian gender ideologies or the division of paid and unpaid work in itself, is the congruency between ideologies and division of roles and its influence on couples' relationship. When couples' ideologies match their behaviour, either by being consistently traditional or egalitarian, they face a lower risk of separation, experience higher well-being and marital satisfaction (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Oláh & Gähler, 2014).

Attempting to address gap in the literature on the impact of couples reversing roles on their well-being and life satisfaction, as well as the influence such decisions have on the quality and satisfaction of their relationship, the following research questions and hypotheses were examined:

- What are the consequences of reversing roles for parents' marital relationships, well-being and self-esteem? Compared to traditional

parents, do role-reversed parents have a higher or lower marital and life satisfaction?

- It was hypothesised that the subjective perception of choice would affect parents' well-being and satisfaction regardless of their gender and role.
- It was further hypothesised that the perception of choice would moderate the associations between involvement in work and childcare and marital satisfaction and well-being. That is, participants' levels of involvement in paid work and childcare would be positively related to their well-being and satisfaction when they feel they chose their role, and negatively related when they feel they were forced into their role.
- In line with the findings reviewed above, it was hypothesised that the effect of role on marital satisfaction and well-being would be moderated by the fit between the role and the participant's gender ideology. That is, congruency between ideology and role is expected to increase marital satisfaction and personal well-being.

Method

Participants

Participants were 242 parents (130 women and 112 men) recruited through advertisements in more than 100 children and community centres, playgrounds and playgroups across the United Kingdom. Eligible participants were heterosexual married or cohabitating parents, fluent in English, who had at least one biological child aged 12 years old or younger. By limiting the age of children to 12 years old, caregivers who remained home until children are independent or who care for a child with a long-term disability were excluded. However, this criterion narrowed our target population, which presented an additional challenge during the sample recruitment process. Individual participants were recruited to minimize the challenges of recruitment, even though participants were encouraged to be involve as a couple, they were not restricted to it and individual responses were obtained, therefore the responses by each member of the couples were not compared directly.

Regarding the allocation to the traditional and role reversed groups, eligible parents were those where two differential roles (primary caregiver and primary breadwinner) could be identified. Criteria for inclusion in the study groups included self and spouse work hours, sole childcare hours and performance of childcare tasks (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Criteria for Inclusion in the Four Study Groups

	Weekly work hours	**Weekly childcare hours[a]**
Primary Caregiver	10+ hours less than spouse (Max 35hours)	10+ hours more than spouse
Primary Breadwinner	10+ hours more than spouse	10+ hours less than spouse

[a]Hours of being alone with the child during waking hours

Initially 630 parents manifested interest and signed up to take part in the study, of those 369 provided full data and were included in the complete sample. The rigorous eligibility criteria of the study groups, only allowed the selection of 242 participants to be distributed accordingly into the four study groups (see Table 2).

Participants' socio-demographic characteristics can be found on Table 3, followed by a detailed analysis comparing socio-demographic characteristics between the study groups.

Table 2 - Distribution of Participants across the Study Groups

	Men	**Women**
Primary Caregiver	57 role reversed	72 traditional
Primary Breadwinner	55 traditional	58 role reversed

Figure 1 shows the distribution of weekly working hours of the different study groups. As it can be observed, most primary caregiving mothers worked up to 20 hours a week, with 26% working from 0 to 10hours and 28% working from 11 to 20 hours a week; while 74% of primary caregiving fathers worked up to 10 hours a week. On the other hand, the biggest percentage of primary breadwinning parents worked more than 35 hours a week, 81% of breadwinning mothers and 84% of breadwinning fathers (see Figure 1).

Overall the age of the youngest child ranged from birth to 12 years old (M = 1.94, SD = 1.40) and the number of children in the family ranged from 1 to 5 (M = 1.71, SD = .78). There were no significant differences between the study groups in the number of children in the family or the youngest child's gender, however primary caregiving mothers had significantly younger children compared with all the other study groups, $F(1, 230) = 5.14$, $p < .05$ (see Table 3).

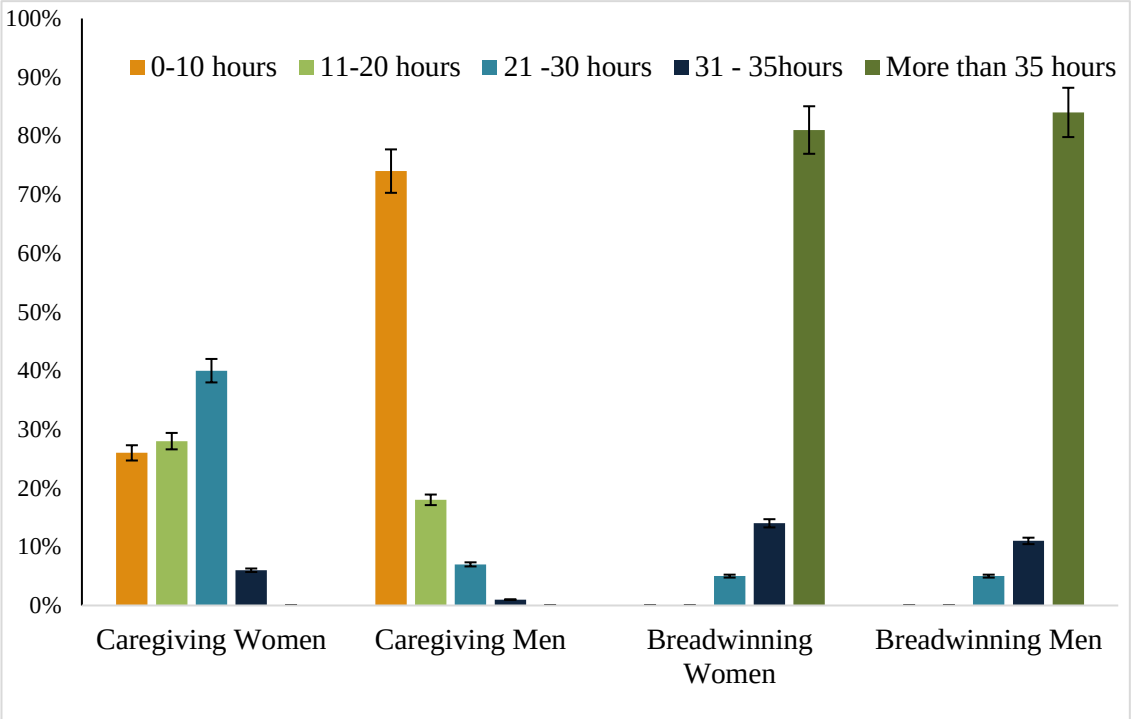

Figure 1. Weekly Working Hours by Study Groups

Primary caregiving mothers were also the youngest group of parents with ages ranging from 28 to 45 (M = 34, SD = 3.81). Primary breadwinning mothers' ages ranged from 25 to 49 (M = 36, SD = 4.68) and primary breadwinning fathers' ages ranged from 24 to 58 (M = 37, SD = 5.87). Primary caregiving fathers were the oldest group of parents with ages ranging from 22 to 59 (M = 38, SD = 7.54). Overall, the mothers in the sample were significantly younger than the fathers, $F(1, 230) = 8.44$, $p < .01$; but there was no main effect of role, $F(1, 230) = .06$, *ns*; or interaction between gender and role, $F(1, 230) = 3.19$, *ns*.

Even though parents represented a broad range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, most participants identified as white and the sample included an overrepresentation of educated parents. No gender differences regarding participants' education's level were found (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -1.86$, $p = .06$).

Table 3 - The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

	Traditional Women (*n* = 72)	Role reversed Women (*n* = 58)	Traditional Men (*n* = 55)	Role reversed Men (*n* = 57)
	n (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Age of youngest child[a]				
1	57 (79%)	28 (48%)	28 (51%)	26 (46%)
2	11 (15%)	12 (21%)	12 (22%)	15 (26%)
3-5	3 (4%)	17 (29%)	12 (22%)	15 (26%)
6-12	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)
Number of children				
1	37 (51%)	25 (46%)	19 (37%)	26 (46%)
2	30 (42%)	21 (38%)	23 (45%)	23 (41%)
3-5	5 (7%)	9 (16%)	9 (18%)	7 (13%)
Gender of youngest child				
Female	32 (44%)	30 (54%)	28 (55%)	29 (51%)
Male	40 (56%)	26 (46%)	23 (45%)	28 (49%)
Age of parents[a]				
22-34	38 (53%)	21 (37%)	18 (35%)	20 (35%)
35-40	28 (39%)	28 (50%)	21 (41%)	25 (44%)
41-49	6 (8%)	7 (13%)	11 (22%)	5 (9%)
50-59	0	0	1 (2%)	7 (12%)
Level of education[a]				
Less than high school	0	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
High school diploma	3 (4%)	0	1 (2%)	5 (9%)
Some college education	11 (15%)	4 (7%)	3 (6%)	5 (9%)
Academic degree	58 (81%)	51 (91%)	44 (88%)	45 (80%)
Annual income[a]				
Less than £7,000	3 (4%)	0	0	14 (25%)
Between £7,001 and £17,400	17 (24%)	4 (7 %)	2 (4%)	7 (12%)
Between £17,401 and £24,200	6 (9%)	10 (18%)	10 (20%)	6 (11%)
Between £24,201 and £31,200	9 (13%)	7 (13%)	15 (30%)	8 (14%)
More than £31,201	35 (50%)	34 (62%)	23 (46%)	21 (38%)

[a]Significant differences were found

	Traditional Women (*n* = 72)	Role reversed Women (*n* = 58)	Traditional Men (*n* = 55)	Role reversed Men (*n* = 57)
	n (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Ethnic Background				
White	69 (97%)	50 (88%)	47 (92%)	51 (90%)
Black	0	0	1 (2%)	0
Mixed	1 (1%)	3 (6%)	0	4 (6%)
Asian	1 (1%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Other group	1 (1%)	0	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Occupation sector				
Higher professional and managerial workers	16 (26%)	18 (32%)	6 (21%)	18 (35%)
Lower managerial and professional workers	36 (57%)	32 (57%)	12 (43%)	31 (61%)
Intermediate occupations	4 (6%)	2 (4%)	3 (11%)	1 (2%)
Small Employers and non-professional self-employed	7 (11%)	4 (7%)	7 (25%)	1 (2%)

[a]Significant differences were found.

However significant differences were found regarding roles, with primary breadwinning parents being significantly more educated than primary caregiving parents (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -3.48$, $p = .001$). Within the study groups, primary caregiving mothers were significantly more educated than primary caregiving fathers (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -2.12$, $p = .03$) and no significant difference was found between primary breadwinning mothers and primary breadwinning fathers regarding their education level (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -.48$, $p = .63$).

Most parents worked in lower managerial and professional sector (57% of the primary caregiving mothers, 57% of the primary breadwinning mothers, 43% of the primary breadwinning fathers and 61% of the primary caregiving fathers). Role differences were found in annual income, with primary caregiving parents earning less than primary breadwinning parents (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -2.16$, $p = .03$). Gender

differences were also found, as mothers earned significantly more than fathers (Wilcoxon rank sum test Z = -2.18, p = .03). When comparing differences among study groups, primary caregiving fathers earned the lowest income out of the four study groups, $\chi^2(3) = 11.01$, p = .01; and primary caregiving mothers' income was not significantly different from primary breadwinning mothers (Wilcoxon rank sum test Z = -.73, p = .46); or primary breadwinning fathers (Wilcoxon rank sum test Z = -.20, p = .84).

When asked about the percentage of family income they earn relative to their partner, primary caregiving mothers reported earning between 0 to 50% of the family income (M = 24, SD = 14.91), while primary caregiving fathers stated percentages from 0 to 55% (M = 10.4, SD = 15.60). On the other hand, primary breadwinning parents reported earning on average more than 50% of their total family income, with mothers accounting their earning percentage from 40% to 100% (M = 89.8, SD = 15.73) and fathers from 50% to 100% (M = 82.6, SD = 16.14).

Measures

The subsequent description of all the measures used is presented in the same order as they appeared in the questionnaire.

Identity salience. Identity salience was measure by an open-ended question, “Who am I?”, asking participants to define themselves in terms of their roles (Gaunt & Scott, 2014). Participants were asked to complete the following sentence "I am ..." with 10 statements about themselves. The following instructions were provided: “In the space provided below, please try to describe yourself in terms of your relationships and social roles. Please write down your answers just as they come to your mind, don't attempt to explain or organise them”. Responses were classified as parental, work-related or other identities and coded based on the assumption that the order of spontaneous recall responses reflects mental availability (Mussweiler & Bodenhausen, 2002). The scale ranged from 10 (the identity was mentioned first), through 9 (mentioned second) to 1

(mentioned tenth) and when an identity that was not mentioned by the participant it was coded 0. Even though participants mentioned a range of identities, the analysis only focused on parental and work-related identity salience scores. Inter-coder agreement was very high for both parental (98% kappa statistic) and work-related identities (96% kappa statistic) and discrepancies in judgments were discussed and resolved.

Identity centrality. Psychological centrality of participants' identities was assessed using Gaunt and Scott's (2014) measure. A list of eight identities was presented to participants (friend, sibling, wife/husband, work, son/daughter, parent, national identity, religious identity) and they were also given the option to add other identity to the list. The instructions read: "Please read the following list. For each item on this list, think of how much you identify with it or how much it represents you." The instructions continued below the list: "Now, please assign a percentage (from 0 to 100%) to each of these items, in a way that reflects how much each item is important for you, or represents who you are. The total must add up to 100%." The percentages allocated to parental and work identities were then coded to obtain participants' psychological centrality scores.

Time investment. Dependent measures of spouses' time investment in work and childcare were adopted from Gaunt (2005, 2006, 2008). These included measures of everyday routines of the parents, asking each parent when do they start and finish work; their weekly working hours and their partner's weekly working hours. Regarding childcare, parents were asked to indicate the weekly amount of hours dedicated to childcare when they were the sole care provider, their partner was the sole care provider and when both provided childcare together. Parents were also asked to report the weekly hours that others (e.g., school, day-care centre, regular babysitter) provided childcare to their child, and who usually took their child in the morning and picked them up in the afternoon. Responses about who takes to and back from other childcare provider were

registered on a 3-point scale, ranging from 1 = *Always my spouse*, through 2 = *Sometimes me, sometimes my spouse to* 3 = *Always me.*

Allocation of tasks. The division of childcare responsibilities was assessed using a "Who-does-what?" measure of childcare tasks (Gaunt, 2005). The scale included 24 tasks pertaining not only housework and daily care activities (dressing, feeding), but also tasks related to responsibility for the child (taking to the doctor, choosing day care/school) and emotional care (helping with social/emotional problems). Participants were asked: "In the division of labour between you and your spouse, which of you does each of these tasks?". Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Almost always my spouse*, through 3 = *Both of us equally* to 5 = *Almost always myself*. Participants also had the option to rate 9 when the task was not applicable to their child, and such responses were treated as missing data. This 24 item measure included four sub-dimensions (Gaunt, 2005). Five tasks (cooking, cleaning, shopping, laundry and picking up after/tiding up) were classified as *Housework* and their average score was computed to obtain a total measure for involvement in housework. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .80. *Daily care* activities included seven items (feeding, changing nappies, dressing, bathing/ supervising personal hygiene, putting to bed, getting up at night and supervising morning routine). Participants' average scores for these seven items were computed to form a measure for daily care and Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .80. Average scores for five activities related to providing companion to the child (playing/reading, helping with social/emotional problems, helping with homework, setting limits/disciplining, taking on outgoings/ social activities) were computed to create C*ompanion* as a measure. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .84. *Responsibility* for the child consisted of seven items (planning activities/scheduling social meetings, preparing the child's bag before going out, taking to the doctor or dentist, providing care when children are ill, making arrangements for childcare, contact with school/ day care team and choosing day

care/school). Respondents' average score on all seven items were computed to form a measure of *Responsibility*. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .91. An average of all the 19 childcare tasks listed above was calculated to create a total measure of *Childcare involvement*. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .94.

Subjective perceptions of the division of roles. New measures were developed to assess participants' perceptions and satisfaction with their current division of roles, the extent to which they felt the current division reflected their choice, and their willingness to change roles in the near future. Parents were asked to identify the primary caregiver in their family on a scale ranging from 1 = *My spouse is the primary caregiver* to 5 = *I am the primary caregiver*. Regarding participants' definition of the primary breadwinner in their family, responses were indicated on a scale ranging from 1 = *I am the primary breadwinner* to 5 = *My spouse is the primary breadwinner*. Participants were also asked "To what extent do you think that this division reflects your own choices and to what extent do you feel you were forced into it?" to measure their perception of choice. Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *We were definitely forced into this division* to 5 = *We definitely chose this division*. To evaluate their satisfaction with their current division, participants answered the question "How satisfied are you with the current division of responsibilities?" on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Very dissatisfied* to 5 = *Very satisfied*. Higher values reflected higher perceived degree of choice and satisfaction with current division.

A desire to change working hours was evaluated on a scale from 1 = *I wish I could work much more (and earn more)* to 5 = *I wish I could work much less (and earn less*). Similarly, a wish to change the spouse's working hours was measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *I wish my spouse could work much more (and earn more)* to 5 = *I wish my spouse could work much less (and earn less*).

The extent to which parents would like their division of roles to change in the coming year was measured by one item: “To what extent would you like this division of roles to change in the coming year?”. Answers were indicated on a 5-point from 1 = *Very much* to 5 = *Not at all*.

The history of the decisions leading to couples' current parenting arrangement was assessed by an open ended question: "*What do you feel were the reasons that led you and your spouse to your current division of roles*?". After a careful examination of all the participants’ answers, a coding scheme was developed. The scheme included seven different categories (economic reasons, health or labour market constraints, being more focused on family caregiving, parent fit, importance of having one parent at home, child needs or other reason) and reflected a variety of categories identified by the literature (Deutsch, 1999; Chesley, 2011; Kramer, Kelly, McCulloch, 2013). The coding scheme was discussed with the research assistant and an explanation of how it was developed, what the codes were and what they meant was given. All the answers were then classified independently by the researcher and the research assistant. Subsequently results were compared and discrepancies in judgments were discussed and resolved. Inter-coder agreement for this measure was very high (92% kappa statistic).

Marital satisfaction and quality. To measure relationship quality and satisfaction the short version of *Enriching Relationship Issues, Communication, and Happiness* (ENRICH; Fowers & Olson, 1993) was used. The *Marital Satisfaction Scale* measures participants’ perceptions of marital quality in different dimensions (child rearing, communication, conflict resolution, division of labour, financial management, leisure activities, relationship with the extended family, sexuality, spouse’s personal traits and trust). The scale is composed of 10 items and participants indicated their agreement with each statement (e.g. "*I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner*") on a scale from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly*

Agree. Responses were recoded so that higher scores reflected greater marital satisfaction. An average of the 10 items was calculated to create a measure of overall marital satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .74. An additional item was included to assess the overall relationship satisfaction. Participants were asked, "*How satisfied are you with your relationship?*", and indicated their answers on a 7-point scale, ranging from *1 = Extremely Dissatisfied* to *7 = Extremely Satisfied*. Higher scores on both scales reflected higher marital satisfaction.

Satisfaction with parenting. Parenting Satisfaction was measured using the *Parenting Satisfaction Scale* (Chang & Greenberger, 2012). Responses were indicated on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 = *Disagree Strongly* to 6 = *Agree Strongly* on 10 items regarding participants' satisfaction with parenting the youngest child (e.g. "*I feel that I have done a very good job as a parent*"). Answers were recoded so that a higher score reflected higher satisfaction with parenting. An average of the 10 items was computed to obtain overall parenting satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .81.

Personal well-being. Subjective well-being was assessed using the *Positive and Negative Affect Scale* (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The scale contained two dimensions: Positive Affect (PA) reflecting the extent that a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert (e.g. "*Interested*"); and Negative Affect (NA) reflecting subjective distress and displeasure (e.g. *"Distressed*"). "*Please indicate how much you have felt this way over the past weeks*" were the instructions given to the participants. The measure had 20 items and responses were recorded on a scale from 1 = *Very Slightly/Not at All* to 5 = *Extremely*. The items related to each dimension were combined separately creating both scales. On the PA sub-dimension higher scores represented higher levels of positive affect, while higher scores on the NA sub-dimension represented higher levels of negative affect. Cronbach's alpha for Positive Affect was .86 and .85 for Negative Affect.

Life satisfaction. Life Satisfaction was measured with the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS), a five items measure developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) assessing satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. Subjective well-being is defined as cognitive and affective evaluations of one's life (Diener, 1984). This broad concept includes not only pleasant emotions but also high life satisfaction. This measure relates to the judgmental component of subjective well-being. Participants answered on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree* to indicate how strongly they agreed with each statement (e.g. *"In most ways my life is close to my ideal*"). The average score for the five items was computed in order to measure participants' life satisfaction. Higher scores on this measure reflected higher levels of satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .90.

Self-esteem. To measure participant's self-esteem from a global perspective, *Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1965) was used. This measure consists of 10 items reflecting perceptual statements of self-satisfaction, self-worth, self-respect and personal pride (e.g. *"On the whole, I am satisfied with myself*"). Half of the statements were positive and half were negative and responses were indicated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree.* Responses were recoded so that higher scores reflected higher levels of self-esteem. The average score for the ten items was computed in order to measure respondents' self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .90.

Gender ideologies. Gender ideologies were measured via Gaunt's (2006) instrument, consisted of five items reflecting traditional and non-traditional gender ideologies (e.g. "*Men and women should share housework when both are employed*"). Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree* and were recoded so that a higher score reflected more egalitarian attitudes toward gender. The item "*Marriage is a partnership in which spouses should share the*

economic responsibility for supporting the family" was eliminated to increase internal reliability of the scale. The average score for the remaining four items was computed in order to measure the respondent's gender ideology. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .62.

Essentialist perceptions. Essentialist perceptions were assessed by a 7-item scale regarding parents' perceptions of men and women as being essentially different in their predispositions to parenthood developed by Gaunt (2006) (e.g. *"Mothers are instinctively better caretakers than fathers"; "Fathers have to learn what mothers are able to do naturally in terms of child care*"). Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree* and recoded so that a higher score reflected less essentialist perceptions. The average score for the seven items was computed in order to measure non-essentialist perceptions. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .85.

Ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent Sexism was measured using Glick and Fiske's Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (1996, 1999). The inventory has two components of attitudes toward women composed by 11 items each; the *Hostile Sexism* subscale (HS) reflects sexist antipathy (e.g. *"When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against"*) while the *Benevolent Sexism* subscale (BS) encompasses subjectively positive attitudes toward women in traditional roles (e.g. *"No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman*"). The responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1 = *Disagree strongly* to 6 = *Agree strongly* of the respondent's sexism score was obtained by averaging the score for all items and the two subscales (HS and BS) were also calculated separately. A high score reflected more hostile or benevolent attitudes. Cronbach's alpha for HS was .94 and BS was .91.

Sexism toward men. Ambivalent sexist attitudes toward men were measured using the Ambivalence toward Men Inventory developed by Glick and Fiske (1996, 1999). The measure examined hostile and benevolent prejudices and stereotypes about men, having two subscales, Hostility toward Men (HM) and Benevolence toward Men (BM). Both subscales presented statements regarding men's power, gender differentiation and heterosexuality, being composed by 10 items each. An example of an item of the HM scale was *"A man who is sexually attracted to a woman typically has no morals about doing whatever it takes to get her into bed*". While "*A woman will never be truly fulfilled in life if she doesn't have a committed, long-term relationship with a man*" can be presented as an example of an item that can be found on BM scale. All answers were indicated on a six-point scale ranging from 1 = *Disagree strongly* to 6 = *Agree strongly*. The respondent's overall sexism toward men score was obtained by averaging the score for all items and the two subscales (HM and BM) were also calculated separately. A high score reflected higher endorsement of hostile or benevolent attitudes. Cronbach's alpha for the HM subscale was .90 and .91 for the BM subscale.

Maternal gatekeeping. Maternal gatekeeping was obtained from 11 items scale developed by Allen and Hawkins (1999). The instrument consisted of three dimensions: standards and responsibility, maternal identity validation and differentiated family roles. Participants used a 4-point scale that ranged from 1 = *Not at all like me* to 4 = *Very much like me*. All responses were recoded so that a high score reflected higher maternal gatekeeping tendencies. The standards and responsibility dimension consisted of five items regarding whether mothers hold higher standards for housework and childcare (e.g. *"I have higher standards than my husband for providing child care*"). Cronbach's alpha for this dimension was .80. Regarding maternal identity confirmation, mothers associate their identity as mothers with observable competence in family work and was measured with four items (e.g. "*When my children look well-groomed in public, I feel extra proud*

of them"). For this dimension Cronbach's alpha was .76. With regards to the differentiated family roles, this dimension was composed of two items on women's expectations and beliefs about men's enjoyment and capabilities for doing family work (e.g. "*Most women enjoy caring for their children and homes, and men just don't like that stuff*"). Cronbach's alpha for the overall maternal gatekeeping scale was .83.

Socio-demographic variables. Socio-demographic variables were measured through participants' reports on their own income and percentage of family income relative to their partner. Participants' individual annual income was measured on a nine-point scale ranging from 1 (*less than £7,000*) to 9 (*more than £52,000*). Participants' age, gender, occupation, education level, work hours, ethnic background, gender and age of youngest child, as well as, the total number of children in the household were also assessed. A coding scheme was created to classify participants' occupation. Nineteen different categories of occupation sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry and fishing; education, etc) were created, based on the industry groups used by the Office for National Statistics. The coding scheme was discussed with a research assistant and an explanation of the coding development process and the meaning was provided. All the answers were then classified, independently by the researcher and the research assistant and both results were compared. Inter-coder agreement for this measure was very high (94% kappa statistic) and discrepancies in judgments were discussed and resolved.

Procedure

In order to recruit participants for the study, visits were made to a variety of parents' groups in Edinburgh, Hamilton, Lincoln, Birchwood, North Hykeham, London and Bristol. Recruitment also took place in Nottingham at a baby show (UK's largest pregnancy and parenting event, exhibiting diverse products and services for babies and toddlers) and by contacting and advertisements at law firms, consulting firms for business, IT and engineering companies and coaching agencies for career women.

Participants were recruited online, as well, through a specialist research company and numerous parenting websites (e.g. www.stayathomedads.co.uk, www.dad.info, etc.), web forums, blogs and social media. Participants were approached personally or online and asked to fill in a self-report questionnaire. The study was introduced as a survey on parents' attitudes and the ways in which families organise work and childcare. An online version of the questionnaire was developed and a website for the project was created as that was proven to be the most effective recruitment method.

After receiving consent from participants, their eligibility for the study was determined by four screening questions. Participants were asked if they had children, how old was their youngest child, if that was their biological child and if they lived together with their child and his/hers other biological parent. The allocation to the study groups was only determined after participants' completion of the questionnaire. Therefore, parents where two differential roles (primary caregiver and primary breadwinner) could not be identified were excluded from the comparative analysis. The questionnaire included measures of involvement in work and childcare, social psychological variables, relationship and life satisfaction; perceptions of their roles and task division and socio-demographic characteristics. Parents who had more than one child were asked to answer the questions regarding their youngest child. The completion of the questionnaire took 20 minutes on average. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were individually debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results

Childcare Practices

Task allocation. In order to gain a better understanding of how traditional and role reversed couples allocate tasks related to housework and childcare, a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA was conducted on participants' reports of task performance (who does what) (see Tables 4-5). Such analysis also aimed to explore if traces of traditional gender segregation could be identified in role reversed couples' task allocation, as well as trying to uncover the most change-proof aspects of parenting.

The analysis revealed a main effect of gender (see Table 4), suggesting that women performed more housework tasks, $F(1, 238) = 9.71$, $p < .01$, and childcare tasks overall, $F(1, 238) = 39.52$, $p < .001$; as well as, childcare tasks specifically related to companion, $F(1, 238) = 5.63$, $p < .05$; and responsibility, $F(1, 238) = 89.86$, $p < .001$, than men. However for tasks related to routine care of children, the analysis shown no main effect of gender, $F(1, 238) = 2.89$, *ns*, indicating that women and men performed an equal amount of daily care tasks.

As demonstrated in Table 4, a main effect of role was found, indicating that primary caregiving parents did significantly more housework, $F(1, 238) = 348.95$, $p < .001$, and childcare tasks overall, $F(1, 238) = 345.91$, $p < .001$, than primary breadwinning parents. A similar main effect of role was also found for childcare tasks that reflected companion, $F(1, 238) = 136.51$, $p < .001$; daily care, $F(1, 238) = 137.75$, $p < .001$, and responsibility, $F(1, 238) = 368.80$, $p < .001$; demonstrating that primary caregivers not only performed more childcare than primary breadwinners in general but also tasks that reflected different dimensions of childcare.

Table 4 - Means, Standard Deviations, Role and Gender Differences in Task Allocation (Who Does What?)

		M	*SD*	*F*(1, 238)	*F*(int)
Housework	*Women*	3.52	.99	9.71**	.77
	Men	3.10	1.04		
	Caregiver	4.10	.62	348.95***	
	Breadwinner	2.53	.70		
Childcare tasks (total)	*Women*	3.51	.70	39.52***	.04
	Men	3.10	.72		
	Caregiver	3.84	.49	345.91***	
	Breadwinner	2.73	.49		
Companion	*Women*	3.32	.72	5.63*	.68
	Men	3.11	.65		
	Caregiver	3.62	.56	136.51***	
	Breadwinner	2.78	.54		
Daily Care	*Women*	3.37	.76	2.89	.72
	Men	3.19	.77		
	Caregiver	3.72	.60	137.75***	
	Breadwinner	2.79	.62		
Responsibility	*Women*	3.78	.93	89.86***	.001
	Men	2.99	.95		
	Caregiver	4.11	.65	368.80***	
	Breadwinner	2.62	.73		

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

While there was no significant difference between primary caregiving mothers and fathers in the performance of housework and daily routine childcare tasks (see Table 5), primary caregiving mothers were more involved in childcare tasks overall ($F(3, 238) = 132.65$, $p < .001$) and specifically in providing companion ($F(3, 238) = 49.30$, $p < .001$) and assuming responsibility for childcare ($F(3, 238) = 159.4$, $p < .001$).

Similarly, primary breadwinning mothers performed significantly more housework ($F(3, 238) = 121.47$, $p < .001$) and childcare tasks in total ($F(3, 238) = 132.65$,

$p < .001$) than primary breadwinning father, and assumed more responsibility for childcare ($F(3, 238) = 159.4$, $p < .001$). As can be seen in Table 4, no Gender x Role interactions were found.

Table 5 - Means, Standard Deviations, Study Groups Differences in Task Allocation (Who Does What?)

		Caregiver		*Breadwinner*		*F*(3, 238)
		Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	
Housework	*M*	4.19 $_a$	4.00 $_a$	2.69 $_b$	2.35 $_c$	121.47***
	(*SD*)	.52	.73	.80	.53	
Childcare tasks (total)	*M*	4.00 $_a$	3.64 $_b$	2.91 $_c$	2.53 $_d$	132.65***
	(*SD*)	.38	.55	.53	.35	
Companion	*M*	3.72 $_a$	3.49 $_b$	2.83 $_c$	2.72 $_c$	49.30***
	(*SD*)	.50	.61	.69	.41	
Daily Care	*M*	3.75 $_a$	3.68 $_a$	2.89 $_b$	2.69 $_b$	47.50***
	(*SD*)	.58	.63	.69	.53	
Responsibility	*M*	4.43 $_a$	3.71 $_b$	2.97 $_c$	2.25 $_d$	159.4***
	(*SD*)	.41	.67	.73	.54	

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups.

Time distribution. Aiming to explore if role reversed arrangements mirror those of traditional couples in terms of work and childcare hours, a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA was conducted (see Tables 6-7). Another goal of the analysis was to explore if role reversed parenting was achieved through increased or decreased use of non-parental care. Reflecting the study definition of primary caregiving and primary breadwinning parents, a main effect of role was found, $F(1, 236) = 603.45$, $p < .001$, indicating that primary breadwinning parents worked significantly more hours than primary caregiving parents (see Table 6). The analysis showed that primary breadwinning parents (with no significant difference

between mothers and fathers), worked significantly more hours, $F(3, 236) = 208.62$, $p < .001$, than primary caregiving parents; whereas interestingly primary caregiving mothers worked significantly more hours than primary caregiving fathers (see Table 7).

Table 6 – Means, Standard Deviations, Role and Gender Differences in Work and Childcare Hours

		M	*SD*	*F*(1, 236)	*F*(int)
Work hours of self	*Women*	27.55	14.63	15.65***	24.17***
	Men	23.73	19.77		
	Caregiver	12.53	11.07	603.45***	
	Breadwinner	40.90	8.29		
Work hours of spouse	*Women*	26.25	19.24	2.73	9.54**
	Men	26.62	17.81		
	Caregiver	41.45	7.29	739.99***	
	Breadwinner	9.27	11.09		
Childcare hours of self	*Women*	26.58	19.82	.36	1.26
	Men	26.79	20.79		
	Caregiver	40.10	17.23	250.87***	
	Breadwinner	11.36	9.87		
Childcare hours of spouse	*Women*	20.98	18.49	1.68	.10
	Men	24.42	20.55		
	Caregiver	8.28	8.16	373.96***	
	Breadwinner	38.89	15.44		
Childcare hours together	*Women*	24.66	11.98	2.89	.40
	Men	27.56	13.57		
	Caregiver	24.73	11.71	2.56	
	Breadwinner	27.46	13.84		
Childcare hours others	*Women*	15.76	12.97	5.40*	.95
	Men	11.78	11.94		
	Caregiver	14.21	12.51	.03	
	Breadwinner	13.58	12.81		

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

A main effect of role on working hours of the participants' spouses was also found, $F(1, 236) = 739.99$, $p < .001$, signifying that the spouses of primary caregiving parents worked more than the spouses of primary breadwinning parents. The results previously presented require cautiously consideration, as the gap in work hours was one of the criteria defined beforehand to differentiate parenting roles.

A Gender x Role interaction was found, $F(1, 236) = 9.54$, $p < .01$, showing that husbands of primary breadwinning wives worked significantly fewer hours than the wives of primary breadwinning husbands.

Table 7 – Means, Standard Deviations, Study Groups Differences in Work and Childcare Hours

		Caregiver		*Breadwinner*		*F*(3, 236)
		Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	
Work hours of self	*M*	17.09 $_a$	6.59 $_b$	40.35 $_c$	41.49 $_c$	208.62***
	(*SD*)	10.18	9.18	7.39	9.18	
Work hours of spouse	*M*	42.29 $_a$	40.60 $_a$	6.54 $_b$	12.14 $_c$	254.40***
	(*SD*)	5.87	8.75	9.04	12.35	
Childcare hours of self	*M*	38.99 $_a$	42.16 $_a$	11.83 $_b$	10.86 $_b$	83.631***
	(*SD*)	17.57	16.69	10.17	9.62	
Childcare hours of spouse	*M*	7.64 $_a$	9.19 $_a$	37.66 $_b$	40.20 $_b$	126.28***
	(*SD*)	8.46	7.87	13.26	17.49	
Childcare hours together	*M*	23.99 $_a$	25.75 $_a$	25.59 $_a$	29.44 $_a$	1.94
	(*SD*)	10.95	12.62	13.26	14.37	
Childcare hours others	*M*	16.49 $_a$	11.13 $_b$	14.65 $_a$	12.45 $_a$	2.24
	(*SD*)	12.31	12.16	13.74	11.78	

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups.

While these effects of role result directly from the way in which participants were allocated to groups, unexpected gender differences were also found. Specifically, the

analysis yielded a main effect of gender (see Table 6), suggesting that women worked more hours weekly than men, $F(1, 236) = 15.65$, $p < .001$. A Gender x Role interaction was also found, $F(1, 236) = 24.17$, $p < .001$. This interaction indicates that primary caregiving mothers worked significantly more hours than primary caregiving fathers.

As can be seen in Table 7, a significant difference was also found in the number of hours of non-parental care, as primary caregiving mothers ($M = 16.49$) used significantly more non-parental childcare than primary caregiving fathers ($M = 11.13$), $t(126) = 2.55$, $p < .05$.

Another aspect of daily routine is taking the child to a non-parental care provider in the mornings and picking them up in the afternoons. Parents' reports on how they divide this task showed a significant gender effect on who takes the child to other childcare provider (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -3.67$, $p < .001$), indicating that fathers took their children to childcare more than mothers. Results also indicated a significant role effect on picking up from non-parental care provider (Wilcoxon rank sum test $Z = -8.33$, $p < .001$), suggesting that primary caregiving parents pick up their children from childcare more than primary breadwinning parents.

Aiming to gain a broader understanding of the associations between work hours and other sociodemographic variables and the division of childcare, correlation analyses were conducted. Table 8 presents the means, *SD*s, and Pearson correlations among the overall measure of involvement in childcare, the overall measure of involvement in housework, childcare hours and three main sociodemographic variables: in addition to childcare and work hours, the effects of parents' income and education were examined, in line with previous findings regarding their possible associations with involvement in childcare and housework. The analysis was conducted using the full sample of participants, separately for men and women, but regardless of their roles.

The intercorrelations among involvement in childcare and housework measures

and hours of care were generally strong, for both fathers and mothers, ranging from .60 to .76. This pattern suggests that performance of tasks and investment of time as a sole care provider reflect related aspects of involvement in childcare and housework.

Table 8 - Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Involvement in Childcare and Sociodemographic Variables.

							Fathers'	
Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*M*	*SD*
1. Involvement in childcare tasks	--	.76***	.64***	-.75***	-.15	-.20*	3.10	.72
2. Involvement in housework	.75***	--	.65***	-.75***	-.21*	-.19	3.19	1.04
3. Childcare hours	.63***	.60***	--	-.70***	-.21*	-.20*	26.79	20.7
4. Work hours	-.65***	-.65***	-.73***	--	.23*	.22*	23.73	19.7
5. Income	-.14	-.16	-.17	.22*	--	.19	5.05	2.35
6. Education	-.18*	-.28***	-.32***	.29***	.27**	--	6.28	1.99
Mothers' M	3.51	3.52	26.58	27.55	5.77	6.66		
Mothers' SD	.70	.99	19.82	14.63	2.27	1.83		

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. Correlations for fathers are presented above the diagonal; for mothers, below the diagonal.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Consistent with previous studies (Gaunt, 2005; Gaunt & Scott, 2014), mothers' and fathers' work hours were negatively and strongly related to their relative share of housework, childcare tasks and the hours of care they provided to their children. That is, the more hours the parents worked for pay, the less they were involved in housework and childcare. Fathers' income but not mothers' was also negatively related to their relative share of housework and the hours of care they provided.

Correlations among education, involvement and hours of childcare, were negative for both fathers and mothers. This means that the more educated the parents were, the less

they were involved in childcare. Mothers' education was also negatively correlated with involvement in housework and positively correlated with their income. That is, the greater the mother's education was, the lower was their involvement in housework and the greater was their income. Surprisingly, the correlations between work hours and income were low: .22 and .23 for mothers and fathers, respectively.

Constraints and Choices

Subjective perception of choice. To specifically examine how parents perceived their degree of choice in their current division, study groups differences were examined using a one-way ANOVA (see Table 9). The analysis showed that primary caregiving parents, with no significant difference between mothers and fathers, perceived having a significantly higher degree of choice in their division than primary breadwinning parents, with no significant difference between mothers and fathers, $F(3, 238) = 5.92$, $p < .001$ (see Table 9).

Table 9 - Means, Standard Deviations and Study Groups Differences in Degree of Perceived Choice

		Traditional			*Role Reversed*		
		Caregiving Women (n = 72)		*Breadwinning Men* (n = 55)	*Breadwinning Women* (n = 58)	*Caregiving Men* (n = 57)	$F(3,238)$
Perception of choice	*M*	3.71_a	>	3.25_b	2.78_b =	3.54_a <	5.92***
	SD	1.12		1.27	1.53	1.38	

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups. Within rows, < or > indicate that these means differ significantly. Higher scores reflect higher perception of choice. ***$p < .001$.

The analysis also revealed that overall, traditional couples ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.20$) had a higher perception of choice than role reversed couples ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.50$), $t(240)$

= 2.04, $p < .05$. Interestingly, mothers in traditional arrangements ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.12$) had the highest perception of choice, contrasting with mothers in role reversed arrangements ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.53$) who had the lowest perception of choice among all the study groups.

Reasons for the division of roles. The history of participants' decisions that led to their current parenting arrangements was assessed by an open ended question. Participants were asked *"What do you feel were the reasons that led you and your spouse to your current division of roles?*". Answers reflected a variety of motives and were coded to reflect underlying reasons, based on the categories identified in the literature (Deutsch, 1999; Dunn et al., 2013; Chesley, 2011; Kramer, Kelly, McCulloch, 2013; etc). Emergent new categories were also developed where appropriate. The seven different categories are presented in Table 20. The following quotes illustrate examples of answers in the different categories.

Economic reasons reflected the wife's or husband's greater income or career potential. For example: *"He earns the greater salary"* (Primary caregiving mother, 33). *"My earning potential and the work I do - which allows me to work usual work hours in the City. My husband had less opportunities to make the kind of money we need and was unhappy in the work he was doing"* (Primary breadwinning mother, 38).

Health or labour market constraints reflected situations where job loss or relocation, job dissatisfaction or instability occurred. For example, *"My husband was made redundant and I have qualifications that meant it was easier for me to find a job. We then had to go with me working and him at home"* (Primary breadwinning mother, 40).

A few parents mentioned that their choice was based on one of them being more focused on family caregiving needs, for example: *"I am the more natural parent (by my*

wife's admission, not just mine). Also her career is on the ascendancy so it made sense for me to put my career on hold for a while…" (Primary caregiving father, 38).

Parent fit was also identified as one of the reasons why couples choose their arrangement. The following quote is an example that embodies mothers' better fit to the role. *"I am better at household tasks than him and things wouldn't run as smoothly unless I did it…"* (Primary caregiving mother, 35).

Some parents also mentioned the importance of having one parent at home raising their child as the reason for their decision: *"Our main priority was to ensure either myself or my husband look after and bring up our daughter. We didn't want to put her into childcare or rely on family to help"* (Primary caregiving mother, 32).

Child's needs were also briefly referred as reasons that influenced their decision, as the child required constant care due to development or health problems. "*My spouse ending up quitting work to become the primary care for our child as he needs constant care*" (Primary breadwinning father, 30).

An additional category was created to represent all the answers that did not fit into any of the previous categories. *"A combination of practicality and idealism"* (Primary caregiving father, 59).

Descriptive and Chi-square tests of goodness-of-fit were carried out (see Table 10) in order to determine differences among study groups regarding reasons that led to participants' current division of roles.

As Table 10 demonstrates, economic and labour market reasons, accounted for 45% of traditional parents and 55% of role reversed arrangements. On the other hand, parent fit was mentioned significantly more by traditional parents than primary breadwinning parents, X^2 (3) = 14.17, $p < .01$, indicating that traditional parents viewed the mother as a more fitted parent to provide care and the father to provide economic security.

Table 10 - Participants' Differences Regarding the Reasons Leading to Their Current Parenting Arrangements

	Traditional		*Role Reversed*		
	Caregiving Women (*n* = 72)	*Breadwinning Men* (*n* = 55)	*Breadwinning Women* (*n* = 58)	*Caregiving Men* (*n* = 57)	X^2 (3)
Economic reasons	21%	19%	33%	27%	4.30
Health or labour market constraints	31%	20%	27%	22%	2.07
Being more focused on family caregiving	57%	14%	0	29%	X^2 (2) = 2
Parent fit	48%	35%	3%	14%	14.17**
Importance of having one parent at home	32%	28%	24%	16%	1.40
Child's needs	50%	50%	0	0	--
Other reason	22%	45%	11%	22%	2.11

Note: Due to breadwinning women not mentioning the category '*Being more focused on family caregiving*', only three study groups were compared therefore the analysis has two degrees of freedom instead of three. ***p* < .01.

Even though no significant differences between traditional and role reversed couples were found regarding most reasons, it can be observed that traditional couples tended to mention reasons that imply a perception of the mother as being more suitable for childcare and the father more suitable for breadwinning, whereas role reversed couples

mentioned predominantly economic and labour market reasons, giving less importance to being focused on having a parent at home or better fit of one parent for care.

Overall, spouses in the same arrangement did not differ significantly on the reasons mentioned for their division of roles, traditional couples (Wilcoxon rank sum test Z = -.19, *ns*) and role reversed couples (Wilcoxon rank sum test Z = -1.18, *ns*).

Descriptive and Chi-square tests of goodness-of-fit were conducted in order to determine differences among participants with different perceptions of choice with regards to the reasons that led to participants' current division of roles. That is, this analysis examined whether participants who indicated that they were forced into their division of roles, also gave different reasons than participants who reported that they chose their division (see Table 11).

Table 11 - Reasons Leading to Parenting Arrangements by Degree of Perceived Choice

	High perceived choice (n = 132)	*Low perceived choice* (n = 79)	X^2 (1)
Economic reasons	51% (n = 43)	49% (n = 42)	.01
Health or labour market constraints	54% (n = 33)	46% (n = 28)	.41
Being more focused on family caregiving	100% (n = 6)	0%	--
Parent fit	77% (n = 20)	23% (n = 6)	7.54**
Importance of having one parent at home	96% (n = 23)	4% (n = 1)	20.17***
Child's needs	0%	100% (n = 1)	--
Other reason	88% (n = 7)	12% (n = 1)	4.50*

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

As presented in Table 11, parents with a higher perception of choice mentioned significantly more one parent being more fitted for childcare as the reason that lead to their decision, than parents who felt forced into the division, X^2 (1) = 7.54, $p < .01$. Such differences in parenting abilities were also accentuated by the answers given, for example, two quotes from mothers both mentioning their own characteristics as being more suitable for caregiving, one perceived to choose it "*... It was me that was pregnant and because we wanted to breastfeed and nurture thought the early years (only realistic for mum to do when breastfeeding) we choose to encourage my husband's career and for me to nurture the family…*"; contrasting with the other's perception of being forced to it "*I still breastfeed so when ill, in night and to sleep automatically fall to me due to that. My spouse is self-employed farmer so his hours mean I must do things while he is working*".

The importance of having one parent at home raising their child was also mentioned significantly more by parents with high perceived choice than by parents with low perception of choice, X^2 (1) = 20.17, $p < .001$; meaning that parents who perceived to have chosen their arrangement based their decision more on the benefits of their child being raised by one parent than parents who felt they were forced into it. For example, "*We wanted to look after our children rather than depending on child-carers. We believe our children will be more secure, confident and happy if we are available to care for and nurture them*", illustrates how parents based their decision on the benefits of having one parent home that would provide fulltime care for their children.

Interestingly, despite the lack of significant differences in the other categories, nuances in participants' answers also reflected to some extent their perception of choice. For example, parents who had a higher perception of choice, referred to economic reasons such as *"I earn more and also wanted to work"*, while participants who felt forced into their current division mentioned economic reasons such as *"Disparity in income - it made far more sense for me to reduce my hours than for my partner to do so. Bigger house,*

bigger mortgage, couldn't afford to do it any other way". Answers mentioning reasons related to health or labour market constraints reflected the same contrast. *"I was made redundant just after our first child was born. I set myself up self-employed and work part time so I can take the lead on childcare"* was a quote from one father with high perception of choice, while *"Husband forced not to work due to immigration issues"* is an example of a quote by a mother with low perception of choice.

Satisfaction with the division and preference for change. To gain a better understanding of participants' satisfaction with their current division of roles and preference for changes in the future, study groups differences were analysed using a one-way ANOVA (see Table 12).

Table 12 - Means, Standard Deviations and Study Groups Differences in Satisfaction with Current Division of Roles and Preference for Change in the Future

		Traditional		*Role Reversed*		*F*(3,238)
		Caregiving Women (*n* = 72)	*Breadwinning Men* (*n* = 55)	*Breadwinning Women* (*n* = 58)	*Caregiving Men* (*n* = 57)	
Satisfaction with division	*M*	3.75_a	3.33_b	3.19_b	3.74_a	5.37***
		>	=	<		
	SD	.98	.84	1.03	.97	
Preference for no change in division	*M*	3.53_a	3.35_a	2.88_b	3.26_{ab}	3.88**
		=	>	=		
	SD	1.03	.99	1.16	1.20	

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups. Within rows, < or > indicate that these means differ significantly. Higher scores reflect greater satisfaction with their division and lower preference for change in the future. **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

As can be observed in Table 12, a significant difference was found regarding satisfaction with division of roles, indicating that primary caregiving parents were significantly more satisfied with their current arrangement than primary breadwinning parents, $F(3, 238) = 5.37$, $p < .001$. There was no significant difference between traditional couples ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .94$) and role reversed couples ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.04$) regarding their satisfaction with current division of roles, $t(240) = .84$, *ns*.

Table 12 also illustrates that primary breadwinning mother and primary caregiving fathers expressed significantly higher preference for change in their division in the future, compared to primary caregiving mothers and primary breadwinning fathers, $F(3, 238) = 3.88$, $p < .01$. Therefore, role reversed couples manifested to a greater extent their preference for change in their division of roles ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.19$) when compared to traditional couples ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.01$), $t(240) = 2.68$, $p < .01$.

To better comprehend participants' preference for changes in the future, Chi-square tests of goodness-of-fit were performed to analyse study group differences regarding participants' willingness to change their own work hours (see Table 13) and their partners' work hours (see Table 14).

The majority of the breadwinning parents, both mothers and fathers, wished they could work fewer hours, whereas less than a third of the primary caregiving mothers and almost none of the primary caregiving fathers wanted to work fewer hours ($\chi^2(3) = 33.32$, $p < .001$). On the contrary, more than half of the primary caregiving fathers, and a third of the primary caregiving mothers reported they would prefer to work more hours and earn more, while almost none of the primary breadwinning parents expressed a similar wish ($\chi^2(3) = 42.15$, $p < .001$). Primary caregiving mothers were particularly likely to report that they would not like to change their work hours, but there were no significant differences between study groups in the proportions of participants who were satisfied with their work hours ($\chi^2(3) = 6.95$, *ns*).

Table 13 - Participants' Differences Regarding Their Preference for Their Own Work Hours

	Traditional		*Role Reversed*		
	Caregiving Women (*n* = 69)	*Breadwinning Men* (*n* = 55)	*Breadwinning Women* (*n* = 57)	*Caregiving Men* (*n* = 53)	X^2 (3)
I wish I could work more (slightly/much more)	33%	4%	6%	57%	42.15***
I wouldn't wish to change my work hours	37%	22%	17%	24%	6.95
I wish I could work less (slightly/much less)	21%	35%	41%	3%	33.32***

***$p < .001$.

Table 14 - Participants' Preference for Their Partner's Work Hours

	Traditional		*Role Reversed*		
	Caregiving Women (*n* = 72)	*Breadwinning Men* (*n* = 54)	*Breadwinning Women* (*n* = 57)	*Caregiving Men* (*n* = 57)	X^2 (3)
I wish my spouse could work more (slightly/much more)	3%	33%	61%	3%	66.34***
I wouldn't want my spouse to change work hours	35%	26%	14%	25%	6.95
I wish my spouse could work less (slightly/much less)	48%	11%	2%	39%	49.91***

***$p < .001$.

When asked about the possibility of changing their partners' work hours (see Table 14), more than half of the primary breadwinning mothers wished their partners could work and earn more, compared with one third of the breadwinning fathers and almost none of the primary caregiving parents ($\chi^2(3) = 66.34$, $p < .001$). Table 14 also demonstrates that almost half of the primary caregiving mothers and fathers wished their partners could work fewer hours ($\chi^2(3) = 49.91$, $p < .001$).

The Effects of Social Psychological Characteristics on the Division of Family Roles

Practices and identities. Our first hypothesis suggested that the salience and centrality of parental and work identities would be related to role rather than gender. Therefore, primary breadwinners would have more salient and central work identities regardless of gender, and primary caregivers would have more salient and central parental identities, regardless of gender.

Work identities. Gender and role differences were examined using a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA (see Tables 15-16).

In line with the hypothesis, the analysis on *work identity salience* revealed a main effect of role, $F(1, 170) = 36.52$, $p < .001$, indicating that primary breadwinning parents' work identities were more salient than primary caregiving parents (see Table 15). However, contrary to our hypothesis, a main effect of gender was also found, $F(1, 170) = 13.12$, $p < .001$, showing that mothers' work identities were more salient than fathers' identities. Primary breadwinning mothers had significantly more salient work identities ($M = 7.69$) than all the other study groups; no significant difference was found between primary breadwinning fathers ($M = 5.71$) and primary caregiving mothers ($M = 4.50$), while primary caregiving fathers had the least salient work identities ($M = 2.87$), $F(3, 170) = 19.07$, $p < .001$ (see Table 16).

Table 15 - Means, Standard Deviations and Gender and Role Differences in Parental and Work Identities

		M	*SD*	*F*(1,170)	*F*(int)
Work identity salience	*Women*	5.94	3.54	13.12***	.12
	Men	4.27	3.81		
	Caregiver	3.60	3.67	36.52***	
	Breadwinner	6.83	3.06		
Work identity centrality	*Women*	13.27	10.56	7.38**	.31
	Men	8.80	8.29		
	Caregiver	7.06	8.58	25.21***	
	Breadwinner	14.40	9.33		
Parental identity salience	*Women*	9.49	1.67	5.09**	.94
	Men	8.70	2.98		
	Caregiver	9.25	2.26	1.81	
	Breadwinner	8.86	2.66		
Parental identity centrality	*Women*	37.66	13.21	.50	.33
	Men	36.14	13.26		
	Caregiver	38.50	13.45	2.71	
	Breadwinner	35.36	12.86		

Note: Work and parental identity salience scores ranged from 0 (*non-salient*) to 10 (*most salient*); work and parental identity centrality scores ranged from 0 (*non-central*) to 100 (*most central*). **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

As hypothesised, the analysis on *work identity centrality* yielded a main effect for role. Specifically, primary breadwinning parents' work identities were more central than those of primary caregiving parents, $F(1, 170) = 25.21$, $p < .001$. An unexpected main effect of gender was also found, showing that mothers' work identities were more central than fathers', $F(1, 170) = 7.38$, $p < .01$. Primary breadwinning mothers had significantly more central work identities than all the other groups, $F(3, 170) = 12.57$, $p < .001$. There were no Gender x Role interactions regarding work identity salience and centrality (see Table 15).

Table 16 - Means, Standard Deviations and Study Groups Differences in Parental and Work Identities

		Caregiver		*Breadwinner*		*F*(3, 170)
		Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	
Work identity salience	*M*	4.50_a	2.87_b	7.69_c	5.71_a	19.07***
	(*SD*)	3.78	3.46	2.33	3.54	
Work identity centrality	*M*	8.74_a	5.80_b	16.31_c	11.87_d	12.57***
	(*SD*)	9.42	7.74	10.52	6.80	
Parental identity salience	*M*	9.53_a	9.04_b	9.39_a	8.17_b	2.53
	(*SD*)	1.80	2.56	1.64	3.49	
Parental identity centrality	*M*	38.66_a	38.38_a	36.48_a	33.36_a	1.12
	(*SD*)	13.97	13.20	12.94	12.86	

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups. Work and parental identity salience scores ranged from 0 (*non-salient*) to 10 (*most salient*); work and parental identity centrality scores ranged from 0 (*non-central*) to 100 (*most central*). ***$p < .001$.

Parental identities. Regarding the centrality and salience of parental identities, our hypothesis suggested that primary caregivers would have more salient and central parental identities, regardless of gender. A 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA was conducted on parental identity centrality and salience (see Tables 15-16). As demonstrated in Table 15 and contrary to our hypothesis, the analysis on *parental identity salience* revealed a main effect of gender, $F(1, 170) = 5.09$, $p < .01$, showing that mothers' parental identities were more salient than fathers'.

The analysis did not provide support for our hypothesis, as the expected main effects of role on *parental identity salience* and *centrality* were not significant. As Table

15 shows, no Gender x Role interactions were found regarding parental identity salience and centrality.

For a broader understanding of the role of identities in couple's involvement in childcare, correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample, separately for men and women but regardless of roles (see Table 17). Means, *SD*s, and Pearson correlations among three measures of involvement in childcare, the four identity scores, and three sociodemographic variables are presented in Table 17. In addition to work hours, the effects of parents' income and education were examined.

While fathers' sociodemographic variables were unrelated to their parental identities, mothers' income and education were negatively related to their parental identities, so that the lower the income and education levels, the more central was their maternal identity.

Parents' work hours (and to a lesser extent, education levels) were positively correlated with their work identity salience and centrality, suggesting that the more hours parents worked for pay, the more central and salient were their work identities. Finally, work hours were strongly correlated with parents' involvement in childcare tasks and the number of childcare hours they provided. In line with previous findings (e.g. Gaunt, 2005; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Yeung at al., 2001) the more hours the fathers and mothers worked, the lower was their involvement in childcare.

Work identity centrality was also negatively correlated with parental identity centrality: -.33 for mothers and -.41 for fathers (see Table 17). This pattern suggests that the more central work identities were, the less central parental identities were. In addition, mothers' work identity salience was negatively correlated with maternal identity salience, suggesting that the more salient work identity was, the less salient was their maternal identity.

Parents' work identities salience and centrality were also negatively related with involvement in childcare, housework and the number of childcare hours performed as sole carer. That is, the more central and salient parents' work identities were, the lower was their involvement in housework, childcare and the fewer hours they spent providing care for their child. On the other hand, mothers' maternal identity centrality was correlated with the amount of childcare hours they executed. The more central their maternal identity was, the greater was the number of hours invested by mothers in childcare.

Table 17 - Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Identities, Involvement in Childcare and Sociodemographic Variables.

											Fathers'	
Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*M*	*SD*
1. Parental identity salience	*--*	*.09*	*.13*	*-.08*	*.08*	*.10*	*.11*	*-.11*	*-.09*	*-.17*	*8.65*	*3.03*
2. Parental identity centrality	*.06*	*--*	*.01*	*-.41****	*.11*	*.08*	*.01*	*-.13*	*-.10*	*-.08*	*36.14*	*13.26*
3. Work identity salience	*-.21**	*-.19*	*--*	*.11*	*-.33****	*-.33****	*-.32****	*.45****	*.13*	*.33****	*4.28*	*3.83*
4. Work identity centrality	*.10*	*-.33***	*.33****	*--*	*-.25**	*-.26***	*-.24**	*.44****	*.14*	*.17*	*8.80*	*8.29*
5. Involvement in childcare	*.08*	*.10*	*-.32***	*-.27**	*--*	*.75****	*.67****	*-.76****	*-.13*	*-.16*	*3.04*	*.69*
6. Involvement in housework	*.06*	*.07*	*-.28***	*-.25**	*.72****	*--*	*.65****	*-.74****	*-.20**	*-.16*	*3.14*	*1.04*
7. Childcare hours	*.04*	*.22**	*-.46****	*-.28***	*.60****	*.53****	*--*	*-.70****	*-.20**	*-.18*	*26.35*	*21.06*
8. Work hours	*.01*	*-.18*	*.45****	*.37****	*-.61****	*-.61****	*-.73****	*--*	*.22**	*.20**	*24.59*	*19.71*
9. Income	*-.27**	*-.22**	*.21**	*.16*	*-.14*	*-.17*	*-.10*	*.25**	*--*	*.18*	*5.10*	*2.37*
10. Education	*-.09*	*-.31***	*.23**	*.23**	*-.12*	*-.23**	*-.27***	*.29***	*.27**	*--*	*6.36*	*1.95*
Mothers' M	*9.46*	*37.66*	*6.22*	*13.27*	*3.32*	*3.25*	*20.06*	*31.78*	*5.83*	*6.81*		
Mothers' SD	*1.67*	*13.21*	*3.50*	*10.56*	*.72*	*1.01*	*16.80*	*14.00*	*2.14*	*1.78*		

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. Correlations for Fathers are presented above the diagonal; for Mothers, below the diagonal. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

To determine the contribution of each identity measure to each form of parental involvement, a set of multiple regression analyses was conducted for fathers and mothers separately (see Table 18). In each analysis, a variable pertaining to one form of involvement was regressed on the set of two identity measures.

Table 18 indicates that the regression equations of mothers' involvement in childcare on the set of maternal identity measures (Model 1) was not significant. Similarly, the regression equation of fathers' involvement in childcare on the set of paternal identity measures was also not significant (Model 1). However, it was found that mothers' parental identity centrality positively predicted fathers' childcare hours, whereas fathers' parental identity centrality negatively predicted mothers' childcare hours. That is, the more central mothers' maternal identity was, the more time their spouses dedicated to childcare. On the contrary, the more central fathers' paternal identity was, the fewer hours their spouses invested in childcare.

To assess the contribution of work identities to involvement in childcare, a series of multiple regression analyses was conducted, in which the set of two work identity variables was entered in the second step (Model 2). Table 18 indicates that the regression equations for mothers' involvement in childcare on the set of maternal and work identity measures (Model 2) were significant and accounted for 13-25% of the variance in the division of labour. The centrality and salience of mother's work identity were significant predictors in all regression analyses. The more central and salient the mother's work identities were, the lower was her involvement in childcare and housework tasks, the fewer the number of hours during which she was the sole care provider for her child, and the more hours her spouse spent providing childcare.

Table 18 indicates a similar pattern of results for fathers. The regression equations of fathers' involvement in childcare on the set of paternal and work identity measures (Model 2) were also significant and accounted for 11-18% of the variance in fathers'

involvement. Fathers' work identities salience predicted involvement in all forms of childcare, while centrality predicted housework and childcare hours performed by their spouse. Similarly, to the mothers' results, the more salient the fathers' work identities were, the lower was their involvement in childcare and housework tasks, the fewer the number of hours they provided childcare and the more hours their spouses were the sole care provider for their child.

When the sociodemographic variables were entered (Model 3), the regression equations for mothers' and fathers' involvement in childcare were significant and accounted for 31-55% and 44-58% of the variance in mothers' and fathers' involvement respectively (see Table 18). The longer hours mothers and fathers worked, the less they were involved in childcare and housework tasks, the smaller the number of hours during which they were the sole care providers for their child, and the greater the number of hours their spouses provided sole childcare.

Importantly, Table 18 shows that the effect of parents' work identities on their involvement was mediated by their work hours. In particular, after including work hours in Model 3, the effect of both mothers' and fathers' work identity salience and centrality on their division of roles was reduced to non-significance.

Table 18 - Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Involvement in Childcare from Parent Identity, Work Identity, and Sociodemographic Variables

	Childcare Tasks			Housework			Childcare hours of self			Childcare hours of spouse		
Model	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Women												
Parent identity												
Salience	.08	.06	.09	.07	.05	.07	.03	-.05	.01	-.03	-.01	-.08
Centrality	.04	-.12	-.09	.05	-.11	-.11	.21	.09	.11	.08	.26*	.18*
Work identity												
Salience	--	-.28*	-.06	--	-.24*	-.02	--	-.46***	-.19*	--	.29**	.08
Centrality	--	-.31**	-.13	--	-.29*	-.11	--	-.12	.01	--	.34**	.16
Sociodemographic variables												
Work hours	--	--	-.59***	--	--	-.53***	--	--	-.68***	--	--	.62***
Income	--	--	.03	--	--	-.02	--	--	.13	--	--	-.09
Education	--	--	.07	--	--	-.05	--	--	-.04	--	--	-.21*
R^2	-.02	.18***	.38***	-.02	.13***	.31***	.02	.25***	.55***	-.02	.20***	.46***
$F(7,83)$			8.29**			6.25***			15.41***			11.02***
Men												
Parent identity												
Salience	.08	.12	-.02	.10	.13	.01	.09	.13	.01	-.03	-.07	.06
Centrality	.15	.06	.07	.12	.01	.01	.02	-.08	-.07	-.26*	-.14	-.15
Work identity												
Salience	--	-.30**	.11	--	-.26*	.10	--	-.32**	.02	--	.29**	-.08
Centrality	--	-.18	.15	--	-.25*	.05	--	-.19	.08	--	.25*	-.06
Sociodemographic variables												
Work hours	--	--	-.87***	--	--	-.83***	--	--	-.73***	--	--	.81***
Income	--	--	.02	--	--	-.04	--	--	-.05	--	--	.02
Education	--	--	-.04	--	--	.05	--	--	-.01	--	--	.01
R^2	.01	.12**	.58***	.01	.11**	.54***	-.02	.11**	.44***	.05	.18***	.58***
$F(7,82)$			16.83*						10.13***			17.42***

Note: Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Model 1: Parental identity only. Model 2: Parental identity variables entered first, followed by work identity variables. Model 3: Parental identity variables are followed by work identity variables, and sociodemographic variables entered third. *$p < .05$, two-tailed. **$p < .01$, two-tailed. ***$p < .001$, two-tailed.

Attitudes and ideologies. Our second hypothesis suggested that compared with participants in traditional division of roles, participants who maintain role-reversed arrangements would express more egalitarian gender ideologies, lower essentialist perceptions, and lower tendency to endorse ambivalent sexist attitudes. To test this prediction, gender and role differences in participants' gender ideologies were examined using a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA (see Tables 19-20). This analysis revealed a main effect of gender, $F(1, 228) = 4.50$, $p < .05$, indicating that women had more egalitarian gender ideologies than men. This main effect was qualified, however, by a Gender x Role interaction, $F(1, 228) = 8.46$, $p < .01$. As predicted, breadwinning women and caregiving men ($M = 4.59$ and $M = 4.43$ respectively) had more egalitarian gender ideologies than traditional women and men ($M = 4.37$ and $M = 4.17$ respectively).

Table 19 - Means, Standard Deviations and Gender and Role Differences in Gender Ideologies and Non-Essentialist Perceptions

		M	*SD*	*F*(1,228)	*F*(int)
Gender ideologies	*Women*	4.47	.56	4.50*	8.46**
	Men	4.31	.65		
	Caregiver	4.39	.61	.003	
	Breadwinner	4.39	.60		
Non-essentialist perceptions	*Women*	3.50	.76	.03	19.95***
	Men	3.49	.88		
	Caregiver	3.50	.84	.01	
	Breadwinner	3.49	.79		

Note: Higher scores on gender ideology measures indicate higher level of egalitarian beliefs. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

A similar analysis was conducted for non-essentialist perceptions (see Tables 19-20) and it yielded no main effects but a significant Gender x Role interaction, $F(1, 228) = 19.95$, $p < .001$. Also as predicted, breadwinning women and caregiving men endorsed more non-essentialist perceptions ($M = 3.75$ and $M = 3.74$ respectively) than traditional women and men ($M = 3.30$ and $M = 3.22$ respectively).

Table 20 - Means, Standard Deviations and Study Groups Differences in Gender Ideologies and Non-Essentialist Perceptions

		Traditional		*Role Reversed*		*F*(3, 232)
		Caregiving Women	*Breadwinning Men*	*Breadwinning Women*	*Caregiving Men*	
Gender Ideologies	*M*	4.37 $_a$	4.17 $_a$	4.59 $_b$	4.43 $_b$	4.56**
	SD	.56	.60	.53	.68	
Non-Essentialist Perceptions	*M*	3.30 $_a$	3.22 $_a$	3.75 $_b$	3.74 $_b$	7.28***
	SD	.77	.69	.78	.87	

Note: Higher scores on gender ideology measures indicate higher level of egalitarian beliefs. Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups.

A 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA was conducted to examine role and gender differences in ambivalent sexism. The analysis only revealed a main effect of gender, indicating that men scored higher than women on hostile sexism, $F(1, 228) = 10.87$, $p < .001$, benevolent sexism, $F(1, 228) = 25.62$, $p < .001$. and benevolent attitudes towards men, $F(1, 228) = 5.90$, $p < .05$. There were gender differences in hostility toward men, $F(1, 228) = 3.36$, *ns*. Contrary to the hypothesis, there were no effects for role or Role x Gender interactions regarding any measures of ambivalent sexist attitudes.

The second hypothesis suggested further that women in role-reversed arrangements would exhibit lower tendency for maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviours. Role differences in mothers' gatekeeping tendencies were examined using independent sample *t*-tests (see Table 21). As hypothesised, primary breadwinning women exhibited lower tendency for maternal gatekeeping overall, $t(125) = 3.27$, $p < .001$; as well as, in the measurement components related to standards and responsibilities, $t(125) = 3.18$, $p < .01$; and maternal identity validation, $t(125) = 2.17$, $p < .05$; but not on the differentiated family roles component of maternal gatekeeping, $t(125) = 1.67$, *ns*. These results provide support for our hypothesis and suggest that primary breadwinning mothers had lower tendency than primary caregiving mothers to manifest maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviours.

Table 21 - Mothers' Means, Standard Deviations and Role Differences in Maternal Gatekeeping

	Caregiving (*n* = 72)		*Breadwinning* (*n* = 58)		*t*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Maternal gatekeeping (total)	2.10	.52	1.81	.48	3.27***
Standards and responsibilities	1.86	.64	1.51	.56	3.18**
Maternal identity validation	2.68	.74	2.39	.69	2.17*
Differentiated family roles	1.55	.64	1.35	.66	1.67

Note: Higher scores indicate higher level of maternal gatekeeping.

For a broader understanding of parents' various ideologies and attitudes and the way they interrelate, correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample, separately for men and women but regardless of roles. Table 22 presents Pearson correlations among gender attitudes, non-essentialist perceptions, sexism, maternal gatekeeping (for women

only) and three socio-demographic variables. In addition to age, the effects of parents' income and education were examined.

The correlations among gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were moderate; .45 for women and .46 for men. This pattern suggests that more egalitarian gender ideologies were associated with less essentialist perceptions. Intercorrelations among sexism measures were strong for men and women; ranging from .72 to .90 for women and .55 to .82 for men.

The results further showed that women's egalitarian gender ideologies were negatively associated with greater endorsement of benevolent sexist attitudes towards men and women. Also, women's non-essentialist perceptions were negatively correlated with hostile sexism towards men, that is, more essentialist perceptions were associated with greater endorsement of hostile attitudes toward men.

Maternal gatekeeping was negatively correlated with egalitarian gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions and positively correlated with hostile attitudes toward men and women. This shows that greater tendencies for maternal gatekeeping are associated with more traditional gender ideologies, more essentialist perceptions and greater endorsements of hostile sexism toward men and women.

Men's egalitarian gender ideologies were negatively correlated with hostile sexism and benevolence toward men, and their non-essentialist perceptions were negatively correlated with benevolent attitudes toward men and women. This pattern of results suggests that men with egalitarian gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were generally less likely to endorse sexist attitudes.

Older and more educated women tended to hold more egalitarian gender ideologies but there were no associations between men's sociodemographic background and their ideologies. In addition, women's education level was also correlated with their

age and income. Men's income was only correlated with their age, suggesting that income increased with age.

Table 22 – Correlations between Gender Attitudes, Ambivalent Sexism and Socio-Demographic Variables

	Gender Ideologies	Non-Essentialism	HS	BS	HM	BM	Maternal Gatekeeping	Age	Education
Women (*n* = 127)									
Gender ideologies [a]	--								
Non essentialism [a]	.45***	--							
Hostile Sexism (HS)	-.13	-.02	--						
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.18*	-.17	.83***	--					
Hostility toward men (HM)	.11	-.23*	.72***	.80***	--				
Benevolence toward men (BM)	-.40***	-.02	.83***	.90***	.79***	--			
Maternal Gatekeeping [a]	-.31***	-.39***	.20*	.10	.18*	.15	--		
Age [a]	.19*	.12	-.03	-.08	.05	-.12	-.16	--	
Education [a]	.30***	.01	-.01	-.09	-.06	-.03	-.15	.21*	--
Income [a]	.13	-.05	.14	-.08	.16	-.08	.05	.11	.27**
Men (*n* = 109)							--		
Gender ideologies [a]	--						--		
Non essentialism [a]	.46***	--					--		
Hostile Sexism (HS)	-.19*	.01	--				--		
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.13	-.36***	.68***	--			--		
Hostility toward men (HM)	.09	-.01	.55***	.61***	--		--		
Benevolence toward men (BM)	-.40***	-.33***	.77***	.82***	.72***	--	--		
Age [a]	.05	.02	-.04	-.12	.03	-.11	--	--	
Education [a]	-.08	.06	-.06	-.08	-.12	.07	--	-.01	--
Income [a]	.15	-.06	-.05	.02	.02	-.06	--	.23*	.19

Note. Higher scores on gender ideologies measures indicate higher levels of egalitarian beliefs, all the other measures higher scores reflect higher levels of the construct. *$p < .05$;**$p < .01$;***$p < .001$. [a]Partial correlations with sexism are reported, controlling for the positive relationships between the HS and BS subscales, or the HM and BM subscales.

To examine further the role of ideologies in parents' involvement in childcare, correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample separately for men and women but regardless of roles. Table 23 presents Pearson correlations among gender ideologies and attitudes and four measures of involvement in childcare. The analysis shows that women's gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were negatively correlated with performance of childcare, housework and their own childcare hours. Such findings are in line with previous studies (Evertsson, 2014; Gaunt, 2006), indicating that women's higher egalitarian gender ideologies are related with their less involvement and dedicate less time to childcare and housework tasks. Childcare hours performed by women's spouses were correlated with non-essentialist perceptions, suggesting that the more the women endorsed non-essentialist perceptions, the more childcare hours their spouses did.

The correlations between maternal gatekeeping and women's performance of childcare, housework and hours of childcare were low to moderate, ranging from .19 to 36. Maternal gatekeeping was also negatively correlated with childcare hours performed by women's spouses. This is consistent with previous findings (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008; Tu, Chang & Kao, 2014) and indicates that mothers' greater gatekeeping tendencies were associated with a less equal division of childcare tasks and fewer hours of childcare carried out by their spouses.

Consistent with previous findings (Aldous et al., 1998; Bulanda, 2004; Evertsson, 2014; Gaunt, 2006), men's gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were moderately correlated with their performance of childcare and negatively correlated with their spouses' hours of childcare. Men's non-essentialist perceptions were also correlated with their performance of housework.

Men's hostile sexism was correlated positively with childcare hours and negatively with spouse's childcare hours, while men's benevolent sexism was negatively

correlated with childcare tasks and positively correlated with childcare hours performed by their spouses. This pattern suggests that the more men endorsed hostile sexist attitudes, the more hours they spent performing childcare and the less their spouse provided care for their children. On the other hand, men's higher endorsement of benevolent sexism was related to less involvement in childcare and more hours of childcare provided by their spouse.

It is important to highlight that in the relationship between participants' ideologies and their allocation of roles, it is not possible to determine if egalitarian and non-essentialist beliefs caused parents to reverse roles or if couples developed more egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions over time due to the adaption to their 'non-traditional' roles.

Table 23 - Correlations between Gender Attitudes, Sexisms and Involvement in Childcare

	Childcare Tasks [a]	Housework [a]	Childcare hours of self [a]	Childcare hours of spouse [a]
Women (*n* = 127)				
Gender ideologies	-.25**	-.18*	-.26**	.11
Non essentialism	-.42***	-.24**	-.25**	.30***
Hostile Sexism (HS)	.03	.12	.11	.02
Benevolent sexism (BS)	.03	-.07	-.08	.01
Hostility toward men (HM)	.16	.17	.01	-.08
Benevolence toward men (BM)	-.03	-.07	.03	.05
Maternal Gatekeeping	.19*	.36***	.19*	-.18*
Men (*n* = 109)				
Gender ideologies	.30***	.19	.01	-.27**
Non essentialism	.38***	.20*	.14	-31***
Hostile Sexism (HS)	.15	.10	.23*	-.20*
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.20*	-.07	-.17	.24*
Hostility toward men (HM)	.07	.04	.03	-.09
Benevolence toward men (BM)	-.17	-.03	.01	.14

Note. Higher scores on gender ideology measures indicate higher levels of egalitarian beliefs, all the other measures higher scores reflect higher levels of the construct. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$;***$p < .001$. [a]Partial correlations with sexism are reported, controlling for the positive relationships between the HS and BS subscales, or the HM and BM subscales.

To determine the contribution of each gender attitude measure to each form of parental involvement, a set of multiple regression analyses was conducted for fathers and mothers separately (see Table 24).

Table 24 indicates that the regression equations of mothers' involvement and hours spent in childcare on gender ideologies measures (Model 1) was significant and accounted for 5% of the variance. Similarly, the regression equation of fathers' involvement in childcare, housework and their spouses' hours spent performing childcare on gender ideologies measures was also significant, accounting for 3-11% of the variance in fathers' involvement in childcare, housework and the amount of hours their spouses were the sole care provider (see Table 24, Model 1).

To assess the contribution of non-essentialist perceptions to involvement in childcare a series of multiple regression analyses in which non-essentialist perceptions were entered in the second step (Model 2). Table 24 indicates that the regression equations for mothers' involvement in childcare on non-essentialist perceptions (Model 2) were significant and accounted for 4-15% of the variance in maternal involvement. Non-essentialist perceptions were a significant predictor in all three regression analyses. The higher non-essentialist perceptions mothers hold, the lower was their involvement in childcare and housework tasks, the fewer the number of hours during which they were the sole care providers for their child and the more hours their spouses spent providing childcare.

Table 24 indicates a similar pattern of results for fathers. The regression equations for fathers' involvement in childcare on non-essentialist perceptions (Model 2) were not significant and accounted for 1-3% of the variance in fathers' involvement. Fathers' non-essentialist perceptions predicted their involvement in childcare tasks and childcare hours performed by their spouse. The more fathers believed that men and women were

essentially similar in their predispositions to parenthood, the more involved they were in childcare tasks and the fewer hours their spouses dedicated to caring for their child.

Finally, maternal gatekeeping was entered in a third step to the regression analyses to determine its contribution to the division of roles. As shown in Table 24 (Model 3), gatekeeping tendencies were a significant predictor of the variance in mothers' involvement in housework. The higher the mothers' tendencies to gatekeeping were, the more involved in housework tasks they were.

A set of multiple regression analyses was conducted, for fathers and mothers separately, in order to determine the contribution of each ambivalent sexist attitude measure to each form of parental involvement (see Table 25). In each analysis, a variable related to one form of involvement was regressed on the set of four sexism subscales.

The regression equation of fathers' involvement in childcare on the set of ambivalent sexism (Model 1) and ambivalent attitudes toward men measures (Model 2) were significant and accounted for 5-6% and 6-7% respectively of the variance in childcare hours performed by themselves, their spouses' and their involvement in childcare tasks (see Table 25). The higher fathers' endorsement of hostile sexist attitudes and the lower the endorsement of benevolent attitudes toward men, the greater was their involvement in childcare tasks. The more the fathers endorsed hostile sexist attitudes, and the less benevolent sexist they were, the fewer the hours their spouses spent providing sole childcare.

Table 25 indicates that the regression equations of mothers' involvement in childcare on the set of ambivalent sexism measures (Model 1) and ambivalent attitudes towards men (Model 2) were not significant. Hostile sexism and benevolent attitudes towards men did not predict any form of maternal involvement in childcare. However, benevolent sexism and hostility toward men were significant predictors of involvement in childcare and housework.

Table 24 - Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Involvement in Childcare from Gender Attitudes and Socio-Demographic Variables

	Childcare tasks				Housework				Childcare hours of self				Childcare hours of spouse			
Model	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Women																
Gender ideologies	-.23*	-.06	-.06	.05	-.15	-.06	-.01	.13	-.24**	-.16	-.15	.02	.09	-.04	-.05	-.09
Non essentialist perceptions	--	-.37***	-.36***	-.33***	--	-.20*	-.10	-.08	--	-.17	-.14	-.12	--	.30**	.28**	.20*
Maternal Gatekeeping	--	--	.02	-.05	--	--	.31***	.24**	--	--	.08	-.01	--	--	-.06	-.02
Sociodemographic variables																
Work hours	--	--	--	-.60***	--	--	--	-59***	--	--	--	-68***	--	--	--	.63***
Income	--	--	--	-.02	--	--	--	-.02	--	--	--	-.01	--	--	--	-.04
Education	--	--	--	-.02	--	--	--	-.08	--	--	--	-.13	--	--	--	-.17*
R^2	.05*	.15***	.14***	.48***	.01	.04*	.11***	.47***	.05**	.06**	.06*	.55***	.01	.06**	.06*	.39***
F(6,121)				19.85***				18.67***				25.12***				13.61***
Men																
Gender ideologies	.34***	.21	--	.11	.20*	.14	--	.04	.01	-.08	--	-.19*	-.30**	-.21	--	-.11
Non essentialist perceptions	--	.24*	--	.05	--	.11	--	-.10	--	.17	--	-.03	--	-.18	--	.02
Sociodemographic variables																
Work hours	--	--	--	-.68***	--	--	--	-75***	--	--	--	-74***	--	--	--	.71***
Income	--	--	--	.01	--	--	--	-.05	--	--	--	-.01	--	--	--	.04
Education	--	--	--	-.04	--	--	--	-.01	--	--	--	-.05	--	--	--	-.02
R^2	.11***	.14***	--	.55***	.03*	.03	--	.53***	-.01	.01	--	.49***	.08**	.10**	--	.54***
F(5,104)				26.62***				24.73***				20.78***				24.98***

Note: Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Model 1: Gender Ideologies only. Model 2: Gender ideologies entered first, followed by Non-essentialist perceptions. Model 3: Gender Ideologies are followed by Non-essentialist perceptions and for women only Maternal Gatekeeping. Model 4: Gender Ideologies are followed by Non-essentialist perceptions, for women only followed by Maternal Gatekeeping and sociodemographic variables entered forth. *p < .05, two-tailed; **p < .01, two-tailed; ***p < .001, two-tailed.

Table 25 - Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Involvement in Childcare from Ambivalent Sexism and Socio-Demographic Variables

	Childcare tasks			Housework			Childcare hours of self			Childcare hours of spouse		
Model	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Women												
Ambivalent Sexism												
Hostile Sexism (HS)	.01	-.12	-.02	.18	.08	.16	.17	.13	.23	.07	.16	.07
Benevolent sexism (BS)	.08	-.34	-.14	-.11	-.48*	-.31	-.12	-.25	-.05	-.01	.31	.03
Attitudes towards men												
Hostility toward men (HM)	--	.38*	.26*	--	.39*	.27*	--	.05	-.10	--	-.24	-.09
Benevolence toward men (BM)	--	.24	.03	--	.15	-.03	--	.14	-.07	--	-.24	.01
Sociodemographic variables												
Work hours	--	--	-.63***	--	--	-.60***	--	--	-.72***	--	--	.65***
Income	--	--	-.04	--	--	-.03	--	--	-.01	--	--	-.06
Education	--	--	.03	--	--	-.07	--	--	-.11	--	--	-.19*
R^2	-.01	.04	.42***	-.01	.04	.43***	-.01	-.02	.55***	-.01	.01	.35***
$F(7,121)$			13.46***			14.03***			22.24*			10.34***
Men												
Ambivalent Sexism												
Hostile Sexism (HS)	.23	.39*	.18	.17	.21	.01	.38**	.38*	.18	-.31*	-.39*	-.18
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.32*	-.10	-.06	-.12	-.07	-.01	-.30*	-.31	-.26*	.37*	.26	.21
Attitudes towards men												
Hostility toward men (HM)	--	.13	.02	--	.08	-.04	--	.05	-.06	--	-.15	-.04
Benevolence toward men (BM)	--	-.49*	-.25	--	-.15	.09	--	-.02	.21	--	.31	.07
Sociodemographic variables												
Work hours	--	--	-.70***	--	--	-.74***	--	--	-.67***	--	--	.72***
Income	--	--	.01	--	--	-.03	--	--	-.04	--	--	.02
Education	--	--	-.04	--	--	-.03	--	--	-.04	--	--	.04
R^2	.03	.07*	.55***	-.01	-.02	.53***	.06*	.04	.50***	.05*	.06*	.57***
$F(7,102)$			18.93***			17.43***			15.29*			20.61***

Note: Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Model 1: Ambivalent Sexism only. Model 2: Ambivalent Sexism entered first, followed by Attitudes towards Men. Model 3: Ambivalent Sexism is followed by Attitudes towards Men, and sociodemographic variables entered third. *$p < .05$, two-tailed; **$p < .01$, two-tailed; ***$p < .001$, two-tailed.

The Effects of Reversing Roles on Family and Life Satisfaction, Well-being and Happiness

The effect of role and gender on well-being and satisfaction. To examine if role or gender had an effect on parents' overall well-being and satisfaction, a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA was conducted on a series of well-being and satisfaction measures (see Table 26).

Table 26 - Means, Standard Deviations and Study Groups Differences in Well-being and Satisfaction by Gender and Role

		Traditional				*Role Reversed*				
		Caregiving Women (*n* = 71)		*Breadwinning Men* (*n* = 52)		*Breadwinning Women* (*n* = 55)		*Caregiving Men* (*n* = 57)		*F*(*int*)
Satisfaction with parenting	*M*	4.96_{a}	=	4.96_{a}	=	4.92_{a}	=	4.90_{a}		.30
	SD	.81		.55		.71		.66		
Marital quality	*M*	3.87_{a}	=	4.02_{a}	=	3.83_{a}	=	3.86_{a}		1.01
	SD	.67		.44		.69		.63		
Marital satisfaction	*M*	5.99_{a}	=	5.69_{a}	=	5.69_{a}	=	5.65_{a}		1.09
	SD	.99		1.48		1.23		1.46		
Positive Affect	*M*	3.52_{a}	=	3.45_{a}	=	3.49_{a}	=	3.48_{a}		0
	SD	.65		.61		.66		.59		
Negative Affect	*M*	1.98_{a}	=	1.85_{a}	=	1.94_{a}	=	1.99_{a}		.41
	SD	.71		.56		.47		.73		
Self-esteem	*M*	2.97_{a}	<	3.21_{b}	=	3.25_{b}	>	3.01_{a}		.13
	SD	.60		.47		.53		.62		
Life satisfaction	*M*	5.37_{a}	=	5.27_{a}	>	4.96_{b}	=	4.94_{b}		4.94*
	SD	1.27		1.14		1.37		1.42		

Note: Different letters on each line represent a significant difference in simple effects among the study groups. Within rows, < or > indicate that these means differ significantly. *$p < .05$

The analysis revealed a main effect of role on participants' self-esteem, $F(1, 231) = 10.27$, $p < .01$ (see Table 24). This indicates that primary breadwinning parents had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than primary caregiving parents.

A Gender x Role interaction was observed on life satisfaction, $F(1, 231) = 4.94$, $p < .05$; suggesting that traditional couples ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.21$) expressed higher life satisfaction than role reversed couples ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(236) = 2.30$, $p < .05$.

For an enriched understanding of how parents' involvement in childcare was related to their overall satisfaction and well-being, correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample, separately for men and women. Table 27 presents Pearson correlations between involvement in childcare and satisfaction with parenting, marital quality, marital satisfaction, positive and negative affect, self-esteem and life satisfaction measures.

As Table 27 demonstrates, women's higher self-esteem was associated with their lower involvement in childcare and housework, and with the more hours they worked and the fewer hours their husbands' work for pay. On the other hand, women's higher life satisfaction was associated with lower hours of childcare provided by their spouse.

Similarly, men's self-esteem was higher the more hours they worked for pay and the less they were involved in childcare tasks. The more childcare hours men provided, the lower was their marital quality, self-esteem and life satisfaction (see Table 27).

Table 27 - Correlations between Allocation of Roles and Well-being and Satisfaction

	Childcare Tasks	Housework	Childcare hours of self	Childcare hours of spouse	Work hours of self	Work hours of spouse
Women (*n* = 130)						
Satisfaction with parenting	.01	-.07	.01	-.10	.01	.02
Marital quality	-.10	-.14	.06	-.03	-.03	.05
Marital satisfaction	.03	-.04	.11	-.15	-.08	.18*
Positive Affect	.01	.01	.13	-.03	-.09	.03
Negative Affect	.02	.09	-.01	-.01	-.04	-.01
Self-esteem	-.21*	-.19*	-.23**	.14	.28***	-.19*
Life satisfaction	.07	-.01	.09	-.21*	-.10	.20*
Men (*n* = 112)						
Satisfaction with parenting	.01	-.05	-.11	.01	-.08	-.12
Marital quality	-.09	-.09	-.23*	.01	.06	-.13
Marital satisfaction	.01	.03	-.03	.06	-.01	.01
Positive Affect	.04	.04	.04	.02	.06	-.06
Negative Affect	.15	.05	.11	.01	-.08	.12
Self-esteem	-.25**	-.12	-.22*	.16	.24*	-.16
Life satisfaction	-.11	-.11	-.22*	.07	.11	-.13

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

The effect of choice and attitudes on well-being and satisfaction. It was hypothesised that subjective perception of intentional choice would be associated with greater well-being, life and marital satisfaction. In order to analyse the associations between perception of choice, attitudes and participants' overall well-being and satisfaction, correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample, separately for men and women (see Table 28). The results show that women's perception of choice was related to well-being and satisfaction, indicating that the higher perception of choice women had over their division of roles, the more satisfied they were with life, parenting, marital quality and satisfaction, the higher was their level of positive affect and the lower was their negative affect. Similarly, men's higher perception of choice was related to greater satisfaction with parenting, life, higher marital quality, positive affect, self-esteem and lower negative affect. Therefore, as predicted, the perception of intentional choice was associated with higher levels of all well-being and satisfaction variables, with the exception of self-esteem.

It is not possible to determine causality on the relationship between participants' perception of choice and their happiness and satisfaction. Participants' higher perception of choice might have made them feel happier and more satisfied or because they were satisfied and happy, they might have a higher perception of choice over their lives.

The results also showed that the more egalitarian beliefs and non-essentialist perceptions women hold, the higher was their marital quality and self-esteem. More egalitarian gender ideologies for women and men, and non-essentialist perceptions in the case of men only, were related with higher satisfaction with parenting.

Women's higher endorsement of ambivalent sexism was related to lower satisfaction with parenting, marital quality and marital satisfaction; with hostility toward men also being related with lower life satisfaction. In addition, the more maternal gatekeeping behaviours women engaged in, the lower were their parenting satisfaction,

life satisfaction, marital quality and satisfaction, and self-esteem, and the higher was their negative affect.

Similarly, men's higher egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were related with higher parenting satisfaction. Men's higher endorsement of ambivalent sexism was related with lower parenting satisfaction and marital quality. Men's higher endorsement of benevolence toward men was positively related to greater self-esteem.

It was also hypothesised that the perception of choice would moderate the associations between involvement in work and childcare and marital satisfaction and well-being. That is, participants' levels of involvement in paid work and childcare would be positively related to their well-being and satisfaction when they feel they chose their role, and negatively related when they feel forced into their role. To determine whether the perception of choice moderated on the associations between the division of roles and participants' overall well-being and satisfaction, correlation analyses were conducted splitting participants by gender and perceived degree of choice. Table 29 presents Pearson correlations between involvement in childcare, well-being and satisfaction for high perception of choice and Table 30 for low perception of choice.

Table 29 demonstrates that for men with higher perception of intentional choice, a positive relation between childcare hours, work hours and self-esteem was found, suggesting that the more childcare hours and the more hours they worked for pay, the higher their self-esteem was. However, when men felt forced into the role, the more involved they were in childcare, the more they spent doing it and their wives spend working, the lower was their marital quality and satisfaction. Additionally, their childcare hours and their spouses' working hours were also related with lower life satisfaction. On the other hand, the more hours they worked for pay the higher was their marital quality and satisfaction.

As it can be observed in Table 29, for women with higher perception of choice, involvement in housework was, related to lower marital quality and time invested in childcare was related to lower self-esteem, while work hours were associated with greater self-esteem. For women with low perception of choice (Table 30) these relations became non-significant, however a higher involvement in childcare tasks was associated with lower self-esteem.

Table 28 - Correlations between Gender Ideologies, Sexism, Perception of Choice and Well-being and Satisfaction

	Satisfaction with parenting	Marital quality	Marital satisfaction	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Self-esteem	Life satisfaction
Women (*n* = 128)							
Gender ideologies	.19*	.23**	.14	.07	-.01	.24**	.16
Non essentialism	.13	.28**	.16	.03	-.08	.18*	.16
Hostile Sexism (HS)	-.15	-.18*	-.13	.01	.03	-.11	-.07
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.18*	-.29***	-.22*	.01	.08	-.09	-.13
Hostility toward men	-.20*	-.39***	-.28**	.03	.13	-.13	-.25**
Benevolence toward men	-.20*	-.26**	-.20*	-.04	.14	-.13	-.10
Perception of Choice	.42***	.48***	.47***	.25**	-.31***	.06	.49***
Maternal Gatekeeping	-.23**	-.42***	-.35***	-.13	.27**	-.31***	-.22*
Men (*n* = 110)							
Gender ideologies	.21*	.16	.02	.08	.06	-.14	.02
Non essentialism	.21*	.08	-.05	.13	-.02	-.10	.09
Hostile Sexism (HS)	-.22*	-.19	.11	.04	-.10	.12	-.13
Benevolent sexism (BS)	-.21*	-.11	.07	-.03	-.12	.15	-.05
Hostility toward men (HM)	-.29**	-.25*	-.08	-.13	.16	-.01	-.12
Benevolence toward men (BM)	-.28**	-.19*	.02	-.06	-.05	.21*	-.14
Perception of Choice	.38***	.33***	.03	.33***	-.26**	.25**	.35***

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table 29 - Correlations between Allocation of Roles and Well-being and Satisfaction for Parents with High Perception of Choice

	Childcare Tasks	Housework	Childcare hours of self	Childcare hours of spouse	Work hours of self	Work hours of spouse
Women (n = 71)						
Satisfaction with parenting	.06	.03	-.01	-.02	.04	-.11
Marital quality	-.17	-.23*	-.08	.19	.13	-.14
Marital satisfaction	.08	-.03	.05	.07	.04	.04
Positive Affect	.08	.05	.19	-.10	-.15	.08
Negative Affect	.06	-.05	.01	-.16	-.08	.08
Self-esteem	-.20	-.18	-.27*	.20	.36**	-.21
Life satisfaction	.04	-.06	-.03	-.01	.05	.06
Men (n = 61)						
Satisfaction with parenting	.11	.08	0	.02	-.18	.01
Marital quality	.08	.11	.02	.01	-.05	.07
Marital satisfaction	.19	.17	.19	-.16	-.24	.24
Positive Affect	-.07	.01	.06	.07	.02	.01
Negative Affect	.21	.13	.04	-.14	-.12	.14
Self-esteem	-.28	-.22	-.18	.38**	.33**	-.23
Life satisfaction	-.19	-.20	-.19	.23	.14	-.05

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. *p < .05; **p < .01

Table 30 - Correlations between Allocation of Roles and Well-being and Satisfaction Parents with Low Perception of Choice

	Childcare Tasks	Housework	Childcare hours of self	Childcare hours of spouse	Work hours of self	Work hours of spouse
Women (*n* = 46)						
Satisfaction with parenting	-.20	-.28	-.24	-.01	.37	-.13
Marital quality	-.20	-.11	-.03	-.03	.17	-.04
Marital satisfaction	-.17	-.14	-.02	-.15	.12	.09
Positive Affect	-.09	-.06	-.08	-.03	.18	-.15
Negative Affect	.12	.29	-.01	-.01	-.24	.10
Self-esteem	-.32*	-.23	-.20	.14	.29	-.24
Life satisfaction	-.07	-.07	-.08	-.22	.15	.60
Men (*n* = 35)						
Satisfaction with parenting	-.28	-.30	-.27	.18	.07	-.35*
Marital quality	-.45**	-.43*	-.57***	.24	.36*	-.54***
Marital satisfaction	-.45**	-.29	-.45**	.47**	.48**	-.45**
Positive Affect	-.09	-.01	-.01	.08	.07	-.24
Negative Affect	.15	-.13	.18	.04	-.03	.12
Self-esteem	-.40*	-.06	-.31	.12	.21	-.20
Life satisfaction	-.32	-.18	-.42*	.18	.22	-.39*

Note: Higher scores on all measures reflect higher levels of the construct. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

To further explore the moderating effect of the perception of choice, a series of 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANCOVAs was conducted on the various measures of well-being and satisfaction, using perception of choice as a covariate. This series of analyses revealed interaction effects on marital quality and satisfaction only, and therefore the results relating to the other dependent measures are not reported.

The analysis yielded a main effect of gender, indicating that men reported significantly higher levels of marital quality (M = 3.93) than women did (M = 3.87), $F(1,239) = 5.46$, $p < .05$. A main effect of role was also observed, suggesting that primary breadwinning parents reported greater marital quality (M = 3.92) than primary caregiving parents (M = 3.87), $F(1,239) = 10.24$, $p < .01$. A main effect of choice was also found, indicating that parents who perceived their role as a choice had higher marital quality (M = 4.06) than parents who felt they were forced into their role (M = 3.57), $F(1,239) = 52.11$, $p < .001$.

As it can be observed in Figure 1, a Gender x Choice interaction was found, $F(1,239) = 5.35$, $p < .05$. This interaction indicated that primary breadwinning fathers who felt forced into the role reported significantly higher marital quality than all the other participants who felt they were forced into their roles.

A Role x Choice interaction was also found, suggesting that primary breadwinning men who had lower perception of choice reported significantly higher marital quality than the other study groups, $F(1,239) = 5.87$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 1). The analysis did not yield a Role x Gender x Choice interaction, $F(1,239) = .97$, *ns;* indicating lack of support for the predicted moderating effect of participants' perception of choice.

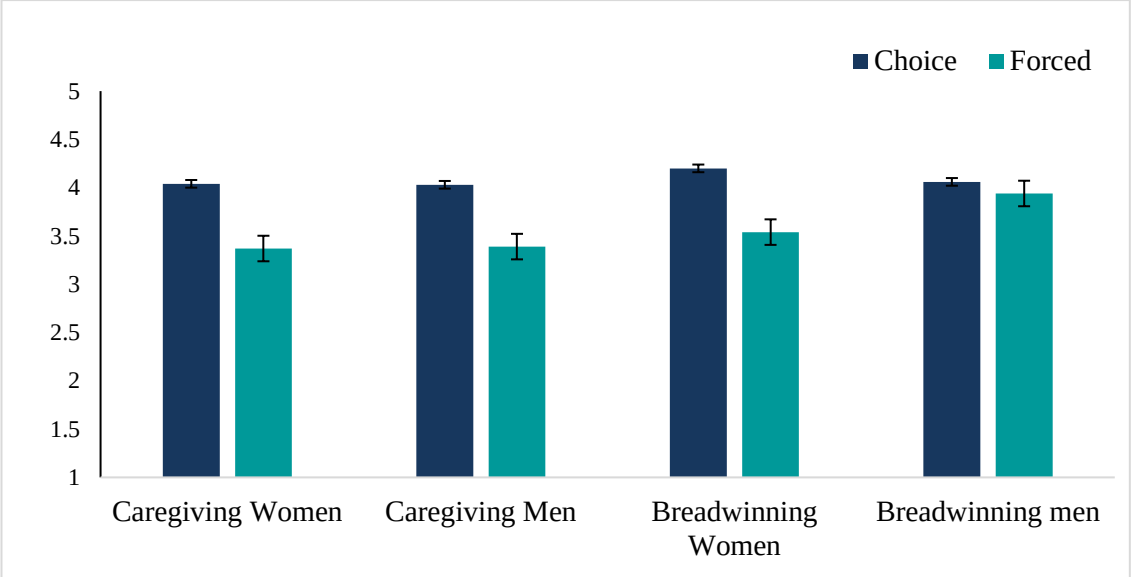

Figure 2. Marital Quality by Gender, Role and Perception of Choice

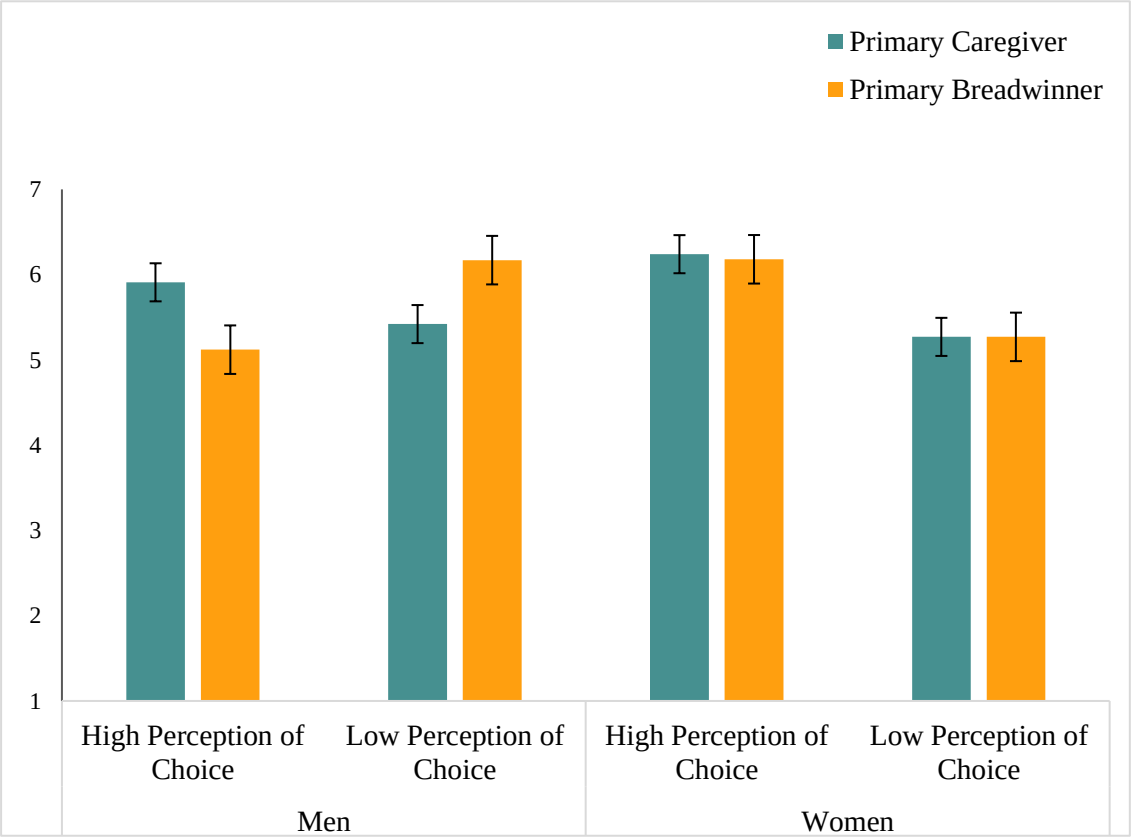

Figure 3. Marital Satisfaction by Gender, Role and Perception of Choice

The ANCOVA on relationship satisfaction revealed that women were significantly more satisfied with their relationship (M = 5.85) than men (M = 5.68),

$F(1,204) = 4.62$, $p < .05$, and primary caregivers reported higher satisfaction with their relationship ($M = 5.85$) than primary breadwinners ($M = 5.69$), $F(1,204) = 4.82$, $p < .05$. A main effect of choice was also found, $F(1,204) = 7.39$, $p < .01$, indicating that parents with higher perception of choice were significantly more satisfied with their relationship ($M = 5.98$) than those who felt forced into their role ($M = 5.44$).

As can be observed in Figure 2, an interaction between Gender x Role was obtained, $F(1,204) = 4.41$, $p < .05$; such interaction meant that primary caregiving fathers had the lowest marital satisfaction ($M = 5.61$) among all the other groups; primary breadwinning fathers ($M = 5.70$) reported lower marital satisfaction than primary breadwinning mothers ($M = 5.84$) and primary caregiving mothers ($M = 5.87$).

The analysis also yielded an interaction between Gender x Choice, $F(1,204) = 6.64$, $p < .05$, indicating that women who had a higher perception of choice were significantly more satisfied with their relationship ($M = 6.22$) than men ($M = 5.70$); while among parents who felt forced into the role, men were more satisfied with relationship ($M = 5.66$) than women were ($M = 5.27$).

An interaction between Role x Choice was also obtained, $F(1,204) = 5.01$, $p < .05$, demonstrating that primary breadwinning parents who felt forced into the role were more satisfied with their relationship ($M = 5.60$) than primary caregivers who felt forced ($M = 5.19$), while for parents who chose their division, primary caregivers reported higher satisfaction with their relationship ($M = 6.11$) than primary breadwinners ($M = 5.77$).

The analysis also revealed a Gender x Role x Choice interaction, $F(1,204) = 4.30$, $p < .05$, indicating that subjective perception of choice moderated the effect of type of division on marital satisfaction. The patterns, shown in Figure 2, suggests that perception of choice affected the relationship satisfaction of the breadwinning mothers, caregiving mothers and caregiving fathers in a similar way. In all three groups, those who perceived

their role as their choice were more satisfied with their relationships than those who felt they were forced into their role. The exception was the breadwinning fathers; those who perceived their role as a choice had lower relationship satisfaction than those who felt they were forced into it.

The final hypothesis suggested that the effect of role on well-being and satisfaction would be moderated by the fit between the role and the participant's gender ideology. Consequently, congruency between ideology and role was expected to increase well-being and satisfaction. To examine the moderating effect of gender ideology by role and gender on participants' well-being and satisfaction measures, a series of 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) x 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANCOVAs was conducted on the various measures of well-being and satisfaction, using Gender Ideology as a covariate. This series of analyses revealed interaction effects on self-esteem only, and therefore the results relating to the other dependent measures are not reported.

The analysis showed that men had higher self-esteem (M = 3.11) than women (M = 3.10), $F(1,228) = 6.68$, $p < .01$, and primary breadwinners had higher self-esteem (M = 3.24) than primary caregiving parents (M = 2.99), $F(1,228) = 4.05$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 3). No support for our hypothesis was found as analysis did not reveal a significant Gender x Role x Gender Ideology interaction, $F(1,228) = .29$, *ns*; therefore, the effect of role on self-esteem was not moderated by the fit between role and gender ideology. However, as Figure 3 demonstrates, a significant interaction between Gender x Gender Ideology was found, indicating that women with egalitarian gender ideologies reported significantly higher self-esteem (M = 3.27) than men with egalitarian ideologies (M = 3.15); while women with traditional gender ideologies had lower self-esteem (M = 2.97) than men with traditional gender ideologies (M = 3.10), $F(1,228) = 6.44$, $p < .05$.

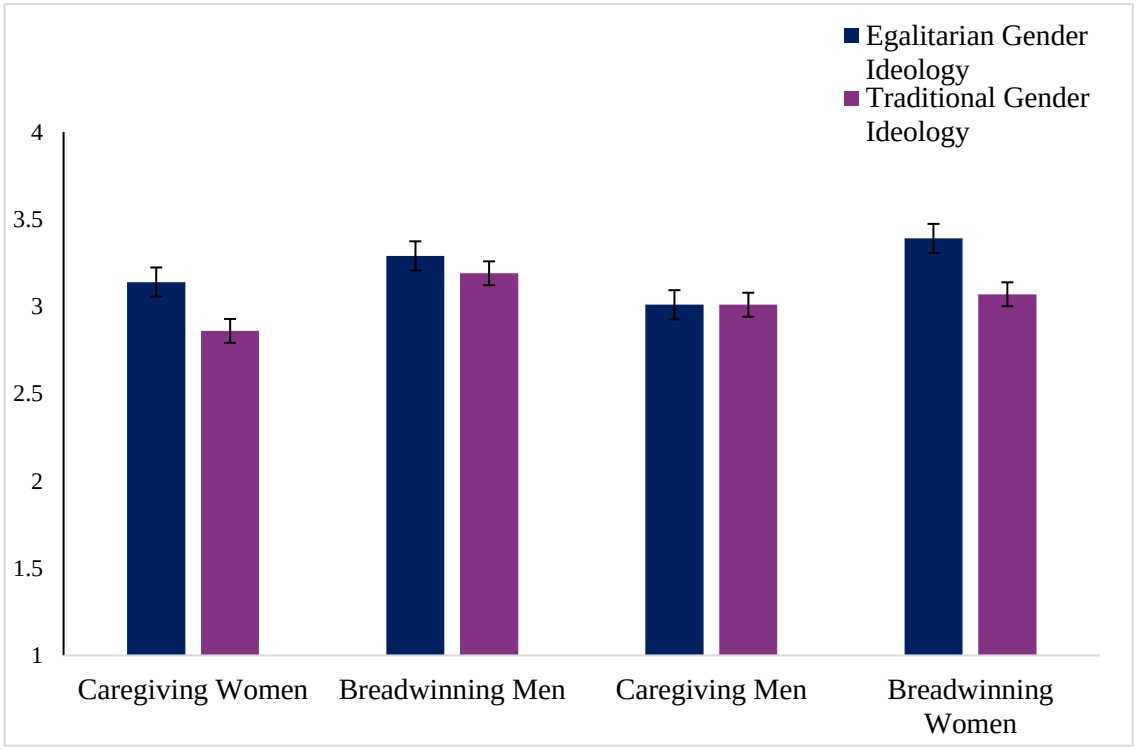

Figure 4. Self-esteem by Role, Gender and Gender Ideology

Discussion

The general aim of the study was to explore the effects of social psychological characteristics on the division of family roles, and the effects of traditional and non-traditional roles on family and life satisfaction, well-being and happiness. The current research breaks new ground, theoretically and methodologically, as it has approached role reversed couples from an integrative perspective involving three major social frameworks. This project expanded our knowledge on the socio-economic profile of role reversed couples and how it compares to traditional arrangements. It also illuminated our understanding of the relations between gender ideologies, identities and attitudes on the division of family roles, and how traditional and non-traditional roles are associated with participants' life satisfaction, well-being and marital satisfaction. As previously noted, research efforts on this topic, with very few exceptions, have used small qualitative samples and focus on men's perspective and experiences of their role change. In contrast, this study innovates by using quantitative methods and studying the two groups of couples together, with the purpose of better uncover the process of gender change. Therefore, the present study allows for a careful generalisation of the findings and a better understanding of the relationships between variables.

Socio-demographic characteristics

One of the aims of the research was to gather more information on the socio-economic profile of role reversed couples, to enhance our knowledge on this new phenomenon and understand what links and dissimilarities can be drawn with traditional families. The findings were in line with previous studies as caregiving fathers in our sample were mostly older white, highly educated, middle class men (Chesley, 2011; Latshaw, 2015; Marshall, 1998; Risman, 1998; Scott, 2011). The number and gender of the children living in each household was similar in both arrangements and overall not

many differences were found on the sociodemographic characteristic of traditional and role reversed families. The majority of parents in our sample were middle class, highly educated and worked in lower managerial and professional sector. However, when assuming the role of primary caregiver, mothers were usually slightly younger than fathers and responsible for younger children, mostly during their first year of life. It is plausible that such age differences are related to the importance attributed to maternal care and breastfeeding during the first years, leading mothers to take maternity leave during the first year of their child's life.

Breadwinning parents were found to be more educated than caregivers, and within caregiving parents, mothers were slightly more educated than fathers. Given that education is related to higher income potential (Card, 1999), couples might have considered in their decision to allocated the role of breadwinner to the more educated between them. Surprisingly, the results did not reveal significant differences of income between caregiving mothers and breadwinning parents. Considering that caregiving mothers' income reports are not consistent with their working hours or in comparison to breadwinning parents, such discrepancy could be due to the wrong interpretation of the question and their reports may account for family rather than individually income.

Childcare Practices

The study also aimed to comprehend the practices of task allocation in role reversed couples, reveal if traces of traditional gender segregation could be identified, and uncover the most change-proof aspects of parenting.

Task allocation. Overall the findings revealed a similar task allocation dynamic for traditional and role-reversed families. When fathers assume the caregiving role, their involvement is similar to that of caregiving mothers, meaning that caregivers in both arrangements are more involved and do more housework and daily routine childcare tasks

than their spouses. This pattern of results is consistent with the economic exchange and human capital perspective and extends to the body of research on relative resources, human capital and structural models (Becker, 1981; Brines, 1994; Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993; Greenstein, 2000). According to the economic, exchange and structural models combined (Bianchi et al., 2000; Bonney, Kelley & Levant, 1999; Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993; Hook, 2012; Mannino & Deutsch, 2007; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010; Roeters et al., 2012; Sullivan, 2011), the breadwinners are the spouses with more external resources, such as income and education, greater work hours, and therefore they perform less housework and childcare. Furthermore, such results are also in line with previous research on role reversed couples (Connelly & Kimmel, 2009; Latshaw, 2015; Raley et al., 2012).

Despite such models explaining the major differences in role allocation and execution of household labour, they do not account for the gender differences within each role. Caregiving mothers were slightly more involved in companion and responsibility related tasks than caregiving fathers; and breadwinning mothers were more involved in housework and responsibility related tasks than breadwinning fathers. This pattern can be explained by the "doing gender" approach (Bittman et al., 2003; Brines, 1994; Chesley, 2011; Forste & Fox, 2012; Greenstein, 2000; Hook, 2006; Thébaud, 2010; Tichenor, 1999; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and is in line with previous research that demonstrates that mothers take on tasks that imply responsibility and companionship (Christopher, 2012; Doucet, 2009; Gaunt, 2005; Klenner, 2012; Rehel, 2014). Women are reproducing existing normative constructions of gender by doing such tasks that are associated with maternal care. Gender discrepancies between breadwinners could also be related to the normative perception of the roles of mother and father, as breadwinning men might feel only accountable for providing financially (Minnotte, 2016), while women assimilate

such responsibility with still being involved with housework and childcare. Nevertheless, role reversed couples are 'undoing' gender by performing tasks according to their roles and having similar levels of involvement in housework and childcare to that of men and women in their respective role (Deutsch, 2007; Latshaw, 2015; Risman, 2009; Snitker, 2010; Sullivan, 2011). By not conforming to gender norms, role reversed couples are eliminating gender based segregation in their division of household tasks and creating conditions to minimize gender differences in some aspects of family life.

Time distribution. Another goal of the study was to further explore the practices related to the allocation of work and childcare hours in role reversed arrangements and uncover if they mirror those of traditional couples. The measures used differentiate involvement in childcare tasks and the amount of time dedicated to childcare, however due to the criteria used to allocate the participants to the study groups, the results related to role differences in time distribution should be considered cautiously. The findings support a mirrored time distribution for traditional and role reversed couples, with breadwinning women dedicating to work and childcare the same amount of time that breadwinning men do. However, caregiving mothers worked significantly more hours than caregiving fathers, being such results consistent with previous research (Chesley & Flood, 2013). Caregiving mothers' greater employment commitment appears to require the use of other childcare resources, which explains their greater reliance on non-parental care. Reversing roles seems to imply that fathers become less engaged with the workforce than women in traditional couples, perhaps because it is harder for women to go back to work after maternity leave or a career break. To avoid being perceived as less committed workers, women might not fully disengage the workforce, allowing a smoother transition later when their children start school. Another possible explanation for the difference in working hours between caregiving parents, could be the fact that primary caregiving

mothers opted to reduce their employment hours in order to care for their child, while many of the primary caregiving fathers lost their jobs and assumed primary care for their child because of unemployment.

Lending support for economic and structural models (Brines, 1994; Deutsch et al., 1993; Greenstein, 2000) and consistent with previous studies (Bailey, 1994; Bonney, Kelley & Levant, 1999; Deutsch et al., 1993; Gaunt, 2005; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Hook, 2012; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010; Roeters et al., 2012), mothers' and fathers' work hours and education were negatively related to their relative share of housework, childcare tasks and the hours of care they provided to their children. In the case of fathers, higher income was also related with less involvement (Sullivan, 2011).

Even though in the case of this study, hours and involvement in tasks were closely related dimensions due to the study definition of roles, it is important to measure both concepts separately. The differentiation of the two concepts helps to understand that caregiving fathers are not only at home spending more time looking after the children without fully engaging in caregiving and housework, but rather spending their time committing to the role. They are taking full responsibility and performing all the tasks rather than waiting for their spouse to come home and do them.

The results also revealed that participants' work hours were not strongly associated with income, meaning that higher working hours did not necessarily meant proportionally higher income. Due to the nature of some caregiving parents' jobs, who work from home or do freelance, in order to have the freedom of taking care of their child, it is plausible that such non-traditional jobs imply not a structured schedule but longer and flexible working hours that do not necessarily translate into greater remuneration.

Constraints and Choices

Reasons for the division and degree of perceived choice. Interestingly, the findings that primary caregiving parents had a higher perception of choice in their division than primary breadwinning parents. Such results provide support for a body of research that demonstrates that fathers intentionally chose their role as caregivers (Doucet, 2004; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). Results revealed a split among women, as caregiving women had the highest perception of choice and breadwinning women the lowest. This difference can be explained by breadwinning women's higher earning potential leading to them to be better fit for the role of provider, and consequently such economic power can become restrictive of their options and full-time caregiving as a career liability. On the other hand, professional women who decide to devote their time to child rearing can find it less compatible to have high achievement in the labour force and simultaneous a 'successful family life' (Whittington, Averett & Anderson, 2000) as they tend to be responsible for the majority of household labour (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Hall, Walker & Acock, 1995; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Kroska, 2003). Such a struggle aligned with their parenting beliefs may lead them to make a conscious choice to leave the workforce.

The analysis of the open questions enclosing reference to the reasons that lead couples to their division of roles revealed dominant topics: economic reasons, health or labour market constraints, being more focused on family caregiving, parent fit, importance of having one parent at home and children's needs; confirming what was previously found in the literature (Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien & Rochlen, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). One of the most provided answers by both family

arrangements displayed economic reasons in line with previous findings (Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, O'Brien & Rochlen, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). In the case of role reversed couples, topics of economic reasons draw on supporting, and in some cases prioritising, women's career due to their higher potential for career progression and superior income (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Merla, 2008). Also in line with previous literature, economic reasons were in some cases accompanied by caregiving fathers' lack of motivation or high discontent with their job (Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). Health or labour market constraints were also one of the primary reasons stated by participants in both arrangements, a pattern consistent with previous research (Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 1999; Kramer, Kelly, & McCulloch, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; West et al., 2009). A novel aspect that can be highlighted from these findings is that traditional and role reversed couples did not differ in the considerations for their decision, and even though the roles that women and men assumed took opposite directions, the reasons guiding their decision process appear to be similar. Motives related to finance and work were the most cited by parents in both family arrangements, indicating that the primary breadwinner role was assumed by the partner that was established in their career and had higher economical resources.

The results also revealed that being more focused on family caregiving was predominantly mentioned by caregiving mothers and to a smaller extent by caregiving fathers, making such findings consistent with the literature (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Kramer, Kelly, McCulloch, 2013; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010). In the case of breadwinning parents, such reason was not as prominent and breadwinning women did not mention it at all. The role difference could be related

to the question being directed to individual participants rather than couples, therefore being more focused on the family is a characteristic of the caregiver and not as relevant for parents who assume the breadwinning role.

When asked about the reasons influencing their decision making process, parents in a traditional arrangement mentioned one parent being more fit for the role significantly more, implying that the mother is more apt for caregiving. Furthermore, only traditional parents mentioned the needs of the child as the stirring reason for their current arrangement. Along with all the reasons revealed in the findings and consistent with previous literature, parents mentioned the importance of parental childrearing rather than relying on outsiders (Deutsch, 1999; Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009). The findings illuminate how families' transition to role reversed arrangements appears to be mostly based on work circumstances and external factors, while traditional parents, especially caregiving mothers, made their decision based on the beliefs that women are fitter for caregiving and possess a superior ability to respond appropriately to child's needs. According to the literature, women's beliefs regarding the relevance of the father's role are associated with more involvement of the father in childcare (Adamsons & Pasley, 2016; Fischer & Anderson, 2012) and their support is important to men assuming a caregiving role (Merla, 2008). Women in traditional arrangements attribute lower importance to the father's role than the ones in role reversed couples. Consequently, such beliefs help shape couples' decision and extend into breadwinning women incentivising their partners to stay home and appreciate more their role (Merla, 2008).

Even when participants in different arrangements enumerated the same reason, a divergent underlying tone could be identified, from parents who felt they intentionally chose the role to the ones who felt forced into it. Parents with a higher perception of choice were significantly more likely to mention one parent being more suited for

childcare and the importance of having one parent at home as the reasons that lead to their decision, than parents who felt forced into the division. Despite the lack of significant differences, the distinctive nuance of answers within the same category and the pattern of answers reflected to some extent couples' perception of choice.

Satisfaction with the division and preference for change. The results revealed role differences in satisfaction levels with parents' current arrangement. Caregiving parents were significantly more satisfied than primary breadwinning parents, presumably because of the higher perception of choice they manifested (Latshaw, 2015; Mathur, 2001; Seiz Puyuelo, 2014). Role reversed and traditional couples did not differ in their satisfaction with current division, nevertheless role reversed couples expressed higher preference for change in their division in the future.

Preferences for the future were in a similar direction: Breadwinners wanted to work less and caregivers expressed the same wish for their spouses; caregivers wanted to work more but only breadwinning women wanted the same for their spouses. Such preferences for change in work hours might be associated with the higher preference of role reversed couples for change in the future, as men and women in such arrangements wished for breadwinning mothers to work less and caregiving fathers to work more. In the case of caregivers parents, their preference for change could also be related to the experience of boredom, or the feeling of being undervalued (Barker et al., 2012; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Latshaw, 2011; Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Schmidt, 2014) as work has greater value in society (Weeks, 2011). In general, the pattern suggests that all parents thrive for the same goal of having a more equal division of time between work and family among them.

The Effects of Social Psychological Characteristics on the Division of Family Roles

Work and parental identities. Based on Identity theory (Stryker, 1968, 2008), our hypothesis suggested that participants' salience and centrality of parental and work identities would be related to role, rather than gender. Consequently, primary caregivers would have more salient and central parental identities and primary breadwinners would have more salient and central work identities, regardless of gender. The question of salience was presented first so answers would not be influenced by the role options on the centrality measure. Interestingly, the pattern of results was very different from what was hypothesised.

Primary breadwinning parents did in fact have more salient and central work identities, but so did women, who had more salient and central work identities than men contradicting our hypothesis. Furthermore, and also against our predictions, women's parental identities were more salient and no differences in terms of roles were found regarding parental identities centrality. Such results can be due to male breadwinners having the least salient and central parental identities while breadwinning women having very salient and central maternal identities. The pattern of findings indicates that women hold more central and salient identities than men in both roles. This confirms previous research that suggested that when women engage in work, even if it is part-time, their work identity becomes more central than their husbands' (Gaunt & Scott, 2014), however at the same time they also have more central and salient parental identities (Cinnamon & Rich, 2002; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Park, Smith, & Correll, 2010). Working women start developing their maternal identity during pregnancy (Gross, 2010; Gross & Patterson, 2001) and such process appears to be a negotiation and accommodation of the new maternal identity with their existent professional identity (Ladge, Clair & Greenberg, 2012; Ladge & Greenberg, 2015). As professional mothers still face prejudice (Cuddy,

Fiske & Glick, 2004; Fuegen, Biernat, Haines & Deaux, 2004), commitment to both identities could be related to their attempts of being 'good mothers' regardless of their professional involvement (Buzzanell & Liu, 2005; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Yarwood & Locke, 2015). In the case of breadwinning mothers, they appear to be reconstructing the concept of 'good mothering' by delegating caregiving tasks and organising while away from home (Chesley & Flood, 2013; Christopher, 2012). Therefore, breadwinning women remain committed to their maternal identity by the time they are involved, the amount of caregiving tasks they perform and also by delegating and taking on responsibility for the child.

A possible explanation for the gender differences in parental identity centrality but not salience could be related to the fact that identity salience requires an unconscious exercise of what is available and relevant, while centrality requires a conscious decision of ranking importance of different identities. It is plausible that mothers have a very strong internalised sense of their maternal identity and consequently invoke their parental identity more frequently. However, when performing a conscious exercise, such differences disappear, as men and women attribute equal importance to their parental identity.

Primary caregiving men have very salient and central paternal identity while having the least salient and central work identities. Their engagement in caregiving and being responsible for caring for their child most of the time seems to enhance their parental identity in similar ways to mothers who perform the same role, closing to some extent the gender gap in parental identities. Contrary to breadwinning fathers, who view providing care as obstructing their responsibility of providing economically (Minnotte, 2016), caregiving fathers perceive their involvement as part of their parental role.

Identity theory predicts that people will dedicate more time and effort to enactment of an identity with higher commitment and salience (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Stryker, 1968, 1980, 2008; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). In line with such reasoning and confirming results from previous studies (Bagger, Li & Gutek, 2008; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Greenhaus, Peng & Allen, 2012; Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy & Hannum, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Rothbard & Edwards, 2003), the more central and salient parents' work identities were, the greater were their working hours, the fewer hours they spent providing care for their child, and the lower was their involvement in housework and childcare tasks. Overall, the effect of parents' work identities on their involvement in childcare was mediated by their working hour. Following the same pattern, the more central women's maternal identity was, the greater was the number of hours invested by them in childcare (Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Scott, 2014; Nuttbrock & Freudiger, 1991).

Attitudes and ideologies. As beliefs regarding gender influence childcare and housework division (Coltrane, 1996; Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Deutsch et al., 1993; Gaunt & Bouknik, 2012; Hochschild, 1989), our hypothesis suggested that compared to participants in traditional division of roles, participants in role reversed arrangements would express more egalitarian gender ideologies and lower essentialist perceptions. As predicted and adding to previous research (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Rooks, 2012), role reversed couples had more egalitarian gender ideologies and endorsed lower essentialist perceptions than traditional couples. Such differences in ideologies and beliefs between role reversed and traditional couples are in line with Bem's (1993) model. By believing that men and women are not designated for different tasks and are equally able to nurture, role reversed couples divide their roles accordingly (Deutsch, 1999; Hochschild, 1989). On the other hand, traditional couples appear to be more focused on gender differences to guide their role division while role reversed couples seem to be led by structural

circumstances rather than parenting related beliefs. The correlational analysis further showed that parents' gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were related to their involvement in childcare and housework. In line with previous studies, the more women endorsed egalitarian gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions, the less they were involved in childcare and housework tasks, the less time they dedicated to childcare (Beitel & Parke, 1998; Gaunt, 2006; Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009), and the more hours their partners performed childcare (Gaunt, 2006). Also consistent with previous findings, men's higher egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions were related to their greater participation in childcare and housework and with their spouses dedicating fewer hours to childcare (Brayfield, 1992; Bulanda, 2004; Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Deutsch et al., 1993; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Hofferth, 2003; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Karre, 2015; Riina & Feinberg, 2012).

According to our hypothesis, women in role reversed arrangements would also exhibit lower maternal gatekeeping tendencies. The results supported this hypothesis and add to previous literature (Gaunt, 2008; Kulik, 2004; Kulik &Tsoref, 2010; McBride, et al., 2005) by suggesting that primary breadwinning mothers have lower tendency to manifest maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviours than primary caregiving mothers. Although the pattern of results was in the expected direction, a role difference in the dimension of differentiated gender roles was not significant. The lack of significant differences could be possibly attributed to traditional mothers' education level, as highly educated women tend to have more egalitarian gender beliefs (Artis & Pavalko, 2003; Bianchi et al., 2000; Harris & Firestone, 1998; Mannino & Deutsch, 2007; Parkman, 2004). Furthermore, an argument could be made that the standards and maternal identity validation dimensions characterise better the concept of gatekeeping than the ideologies dimension as they inhibit father's participation to a greater extent.

Also in line with previous research (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, Sokolowski, 2008; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; McBride, et al., 2005; Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, Mangelsdorf & Sokolowski, 2008), the endorsement of maternal gatekeeping was associated with mothers' greater involvement in childcare and also with less involvement by their spouses (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008; Tu, Chang & Kao, 2014).

Our hypothesis also predicted that compared with traditional couples, role reversed couples would express lower tendency to endorse ambivalent sexist attitudes, however the results did not confirm these predictions and only gender differences were found. Similar to earlier research, men scored higher on hostile and benevolent sexism toward women (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000; Glick et al. 2004; Roets, Van Hiel & Dhont, 2012) and also outscored women on benevolence toward men (Glick et al., 2004). It not surprising that men show a higher tendency than women to endorse ideas that favour and maintain them in higher power positions. Even in the case of caregiving men, as such ideologies support the idea of men as the provider of the family, the fact that they wish to work and earn more could be related to the corroboration of such ideas. However, even though men endorsed more sexist attitudes than women, their endorsement of sexism was on average low, indicating that men had lower agreement with such ideologies.

Correlational analysis on the full sample showed that men's sexist attitudes were related to their performance of childcare in a surprising way: the findings revealed that higher endorsement of hostile sexist attitudes by men was related to more hours spent performing childcare and fewer hours of childcare provided by their spouse, while results on benevolent sexism had the opposite direction. Such difference could be explained by hostile sexism being associated with negative attitudes towards women, while benevolent

sexism has a 'positive' tone. Therefore, the more men endorsed negative attitudes towards women, the more they might want to care for the child themselves, while the more they endorsed sexism with a positive tone, women were more involved in care. Another alternative explanation could be related to that fact that the more men felt were forced into the caregiver role, the more resentment they felt toward the breadwinning women, who are the typical target of hostile sexism as they oppose 'traditional' feminine roles.

The findings allowed for an understanding of the contributions of participants' attitudes and ideologies in their involvement in childcare and housework. Participants' non-essentialist perceptions brought the largest contribution when explaining their involvement in childcare and housework. Therefore, findings related to participants' beliefs that men and women are equally able to nurture appear to explain to a greater degree parents' involvement in childcare, housework and the amount of time dedicated to such tasks. On the other hand, the findings related to gender ideologies also explained to a slightly smaller extent parents' involvement in childcare and housework.

Results on ambivalent sexist attitudes contributed the least when explaining men and women's involvement in childcare and housework. Both hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes were the least supported by the data in the study.

In the case of women only, findings on maternal gatekeeping tendencies also contributed to a small extent to explain mothers' involvement in housework.

The Effects of Reversing Roles on Family and Life Satisfaction, Well-being and Happiness

The final aim of the study was to explore the effects of traditional and non-traditional roles on family and life satisfaction, well-being and happiness. The findings revealed a role difference in self-esteem levels, and relations between work, childcare hours and participants' self-esteem. Work and employment are associated with higher well-being (Pavot & Diener, 2008) whereas unemployment is linked to lower self-esteem (Sheeran, Abrams & Orbell, 1995; Winefield, Tiggemann & Winefield, 1992) and happiness (Frey & Sturzer, 2000). Therefore, is not surprising that primary breadwinning parents in our study had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than primary caregiving parents, and that longer working hours were associated with higher self-esteem for both men and women. On the other hand, greater involvement in childcare was associated with women's lower levels of self-esteem. Such results are in line with previous research, that indicates that more time spent by women performing housework is associated with lower well-being (Des Rivieres-Pigeon, Saurel-Cubizolles, & Romito, 2002). This relation could be due to the low perception of value society attributes to housework (Gavron, 1983), consequently the more time women devote to it, the less appreciated they feel. For men, higher involvement in childcare was also related with lower self-esteem, poorer marital quality and lower life satisfaction. However, such results are better explained when choice is taken into account. Involvement in childcare was related to lower marital quality, satisfaction and self-esteem when men felt forced into the role, however men who felt that they chose their role freely did not show these associations. Furthermore, for men with a higher perception of choice over their arrangement, higher involvement in childcare was associated with higher self-esteem levels. This pattern of results adds to previous research which suggests that father's involvement contributes to their

satisfaction and well-being (Hawkins & Belsky, 1989; Knoester, Petts, & Eggebeen, 2007; Levy-Shiff, 1994; Pleck, 2010b; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Schindler, 2010) and marital satisfaction (Holland & McElwain, 2013; Lee & Doherty, 2007; Schober, 2013; Stevens, Kiger & Riley, 2001) by highlighting the importance of men's perception of choice and satisfaction with their role (Berman & Pedersen, 1987).

Our hypothesis suggested that the subjective perception of choice would affect parents' well-being and satisfaction regardless of their gender and role. It was further hypothesised that the perception of choice would moderate the associations between involvement in work and childcare and marital satisfaction and well-being. That is, participants' levels of involvement in paid work and childcare would be positively related to their well-being and satisfaction when they feel they chose their role, and negatively related when they feel they were forced into their role. The findings revealed that breadwinning mothers, caregiving mothers and caregiving fathers who perceived their role as their choice were more satisfied with their relationships than those who felt they were forced into their role. It is possible that conflict and to some extent tension between the couple arises, when someone is assuming a new role that goes against their preference. Interestingly, the results for breadwinning fathers were in the opposite direction, meaning that those who perceived their role as a choice had lower relationship satisfaction than those who felt they were forced into it. One possible explanation for the difference between breadwinning fathers and the other study groups could be associated with the social prescriptions of roles. The impact of being forced into a primary breadwinning role might not have been negative for fathers as they may accept this role as normative and did not consider any other alterative role for themselves. On the other hand, it is also possible that breadwinning fathers who felt like their arrangement was chosen, could be referring to their wives' decision to stay at home or work part-time rather than their own,

and perhaps do not feel satisfied with this choice, as they would rather have a dual-earner arrangement.

It was also predicted that the effect of role on well-being, life and marital satisfaction would be moderated by the fit between the role and the participant's gender ideology. Consequently, congruence between ideology and role was expected to increase life satisfaction and marital quality. The results did not support the hypothesis as fit between gender ideology and role did not had an effect on life satisfaction and marital quality. It is plausible that egalitarian gender ideologies do not necessarily mean the desire to reverse roles, fathers might not necessarily want to stay-at-home and look after their children or mothers might not want to be the main breadwinner in their family but instead such ideologies might mean support for an equal division of roles and tasks. Therefore, parents who felt forced into an unequal division were not satisfied with the life and their relationship. Another possible explanation for such results might be related with parents who were forced into their role, as the lack of perception of choice might overrule the possible fit between role and ideology, making parents less satisfied with life and with lower marital quality. The sample size limited the analysis as it was not large enough to enable the examination of both, moderation by attitudes and by perception of choice within the same analysis. Therefore, it can present some limitations in the analysis and conclusions that can be drawn from the results.

Overall, the findings from the current study expand the existing literature on role reversed couples, not only by adding to the reasons and experiences of people who choose non-traditional roles, but also by uncovering the practices of time and task distribution by those couples, the social psychological mechanisms underlying their choices and practices, and the potential consequences of such choices for their well-being. The present study further adds to the literature that focus on interactive processes of change rather

than the persistence of current inequalities (e.g. Chesley, 2011; Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Sullivan, 2011).

Two major dimensions of childcare and housework practices were explored in the current research, time investment and task performance by role reversed and traditional couples. However, breadwinning mothers still remain fairly involved in housework and assume a lot of responsibility for management and organisation, which still remains associated with maternal responsibility. Overall the findings revealed a similar time and task allocation dynamic for traditional and role reversed families according to individual roles. Role reversed couples 'undo' gender by making it irrelevant in their involvement in household tasks (Deutsch, 2007; Latshaw, 2015; Risman, 2009; Snitker, 2010; Sullivan, 2011).

The associations between mothers' and fathers' work hours and education and their relative share of housework support the economic, human capital and structural models (Becker, 1981; Brines, 1994; Deutsch et al., 1993; Greenstein, 2000), implying that women's equality might be related to higher resources such as income and education. Furthermore, independent of the structural circumstances that lead couples to their arrangement, our findings support the body of research that demonstrates that the majority of fathers intentionally chose their role as caregivers (Doucet, 2004; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2015; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008; Waller, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). Consequently, even if structural conditions such as wife's higher income potential or establishment in her career are the catalysers for change, at some point men support their wife's career and by consequence parenting becomes de-gendered, as primary caregiving fathers become highly involved in housework and caregiving and perform all the tasks to the same extent as women in the same role. However, while in terms of practices role reversed and

traditional couples are very similar in their distribution of time and tasks according to role, they do differ in their gender and parenting related beliefs. When asked about the reasons that lead to their arrangement, traditional couples mention more motives related with the mother being more fit for the role and better able to respond to their child's needs. Such reasons reflect to some extent the different social psychological mechanisms underlying couples' decisions.

The beliefs regarding gender and biological essentialist are distinctive in both arrangements. Egalitarian beliefs and the idea that men and women are equal in their predisposition to care and nurture allows for de-gendered parenting to happen. It appears that such set of beliefs breaks down women's resistance and reluctance to share and allows men to behave like equal parents. By believing that men have the same ability to nurture, women promote the father's access to the child, allowing for a higher involvement and exhibiting less maternal gatekeeping. Such egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions are also related to men's higher parenting satisfaction.

Our findings enhance our understanding of the effects of role, gender and structural characteristics on work and parental identities. Taken together, our results reveal that in the case of caregiving fathers, it appears that they not to attach great importance to their work identity unlike caregiving mothers. Nevertheless, similar to caregiving mothers, their parental identities hold a lot of meaning. On the other hand, for breadwinning mothers the importance attached to their work and parental identity is greater than breadwinning fathers. Such identities appear to guide parents' behaviour and their involvement in work and childcare. Finally, by exploring the subjective perception of intentional choice, our findings revealed that choice is an important factor in couples' well-being, marital and life satisfaction.

Subjective well-being is defined as the individual cognitive and affective evaluations of one's life (Diener, 1984). Therefore, subjective well-being is a broad concept that includes experiencing pleasant emotions, low levels of negative moods and high life satisfaction. In the present study subjective well-being was addressed by using a variety of instruments that relate to each evaluation, contributing for a broader understanding of the consequences of reversing roles. The relation between higher perception of choice and well-being, marital and life satisfaction; reveals that choice is a moderator of effect of the type of division on marital satisfaction. Choice appears to be particularly relevant for caregiving men, as our findings revealed a clear contrast between fathers who felt forced into the role of caregiver and fathers who felt like they chose it, and their marital satisfaction.

Overall, role reversed couples are making their way into gender-free parenting, however there are still some barriers to overcome. Given the high costs of childcare in the UK, many couples are not able to afford full-time childcare and are consequently restricting their participation in the labour market. Our findings indicate that choice is a key element for individual well-being and relationship satisfaction. Childcare is an essential service for many families, enabling parents to work or ensuring that all children have equal preparation starting school. The provision of affordable and high quality childcare services would ensure a range of options for families.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The study focused only on heterosexual married or cohabitating couples who were parents of a young child, excluding other family structures (e.g. divorced, single, same-sex parents, etc.). Therefore, there are some limitations regarding the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. The fact that individual participants (rather than couples) were recruited

could be considered a limitation as the measures of involvement relied on the account of one spouse only. It also limits our understanding of the relationship between gender and role allocation within couples under different circumstances. However, due to the challenges of recruitment and underrepresentation of role reversed couples in the general population such criterion was created to facilitate the data collection. Therefore, such limitation can also be considered a gain to our understanding in the field, as it allowed for the recruitment of a considerable sample size of participants that represent a small group of the population and are rarely being studied.

The sample is also characterised by an over representation of middle class, well-educated parents. Therefore, to what extent the role reversed couples included in the study represent role reversed families is unknown. Nevertheless, the sample provides a good account of the experiences of middle class, white families and has the potential to inform the literature on de-gendered parenting practices. Parents of lower socioeconomic background are more constrained in terms of childcare alternatives and therefore are likely to exhibit weaker associations between their views and their childcare practices. Families where two incomes are absolutely necessary can have a restricted range of choices despite their beliefs or preferences. Therefore, by including a more representative sample future research could uncover the relationship between parents' views and childcare practices.

When compared to caregiving men, a higher percentage of caregiving women worked weekly between 31 to 35 hours, such difference poses the question of to what extent primary caregiving women and men could be considered equivalent groups in terms of their working patterns. Even though the selection criteria regarding working and care hours was applied equally to both caregiving groups, the way caregiving women and men cope with their work and family balance appears to be different, as does their

relationship and involvement in the labour market. On the other hand, the majority of primary caregiving parents worked up to 20 hours a week, presenting a limitation on whether the family arrangements studied, were in deed, traditional and role reversed or represented a 1.5 earner families. An argument can be made that due to the working hours of both study groups were lower than a standard part-time job in the UK, parents spent most of their time caring for their children, being in fact the primary caregiver of the family.

Even though the questionnaire used included a balance between well validated measures and some new measures to address new issues not previously studied, all of them were self-report measures which can lead to social desirability issues and reduced validity concerns. For example, participants' reports on the division of household or childcare can be underestimating or overestimating their own contribution and their partners. To address this issue, future research could combine self-report measures or diary data with observations of couples' division of childcare in their home, improve the accuracy of childcare involvement measures.

Another limitation of the study is its cross-sectional design. Due to the measurement of different variables simultaneously, no definitive casual conclusions can be made. In the relationship between participants' ideologies and their allocation of roles, it is not possible to determine if egalitarian and non-essentialist beliefs caused parents to reverse roles or if couples developed more egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions over time due to the adaption to their 'non-traditional' roles. Further research into such relationship is needed, and longitudinal studies accompanying role reversed and traditional families previous to the birth of their first child and after the assumption of parental roles, would help to enhance our understanding of the associations between ideologies and adoption of roles. It would also be interesting to explore how couples

allocated childcare and housework tasks before reversing roles, and understand if the division was similar before they reverse roles or if they change their task allocation due to the circumstances. Similarly, no causal relations can be established between egalitarian ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions and parents' involvement in childcare. It is possible that father's level of involvement in childcare and housework shapes their gender ideologies of appropriate parenting roles for men and women or that due to their ideologies fathers are more involved.

The same limitation is applicable to the relationship between maternal gatekeeping and parents' involvement in childcare. An argument can be made that mothers exhibit gatekeeping as a result of fathers' reluctance to be involved in childcare, rather than fathers' lower involvement being caused by maternal gatekeeping (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Fathers' reluctance to be involved in childcare could be related to men's paternal identities not being very salient and therefore not being motivated to participate in childcare. However, it seems more plausible that mothers are inhibiting fathers' participation as, breadwinning fathers have very parental salient identities and are quite involved in childcare overall. Future research could use qualitative analyses to investigate how parents' identities and ideologies are reflected in their decision making process and how women's incentive and encouragement is an influent component in men's decision to stay home and participate in childcare.

The limitations associated with the cross-sectional design of the study also extends to the relationship between choice, role allocation, well-being, life and marital satisfaction. It is not possible to determine if participants' higher perception of choice made them feel happier and more satisfied or because they are satisfied and happy, they have higher perception of choice over their lives. Therefore, the possibility of choice being a result rather than cause cannot be excluded.

Policy Implications

Research has demonstrated that children benefit on social-emotional, intellectual, language and motor developmentally from their fathers' involvement (Amato, 1994; Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, Horowitz, & Kinukawa, 2008; Lamb, 2010). Parenting programmes have been created (e.g. *Parents as Partners in the UK* by the Early Intervention Foundation, or *Fathers in Sure Start* by Sure Start, or *Baby Father Initiative* by Barnardo's 2016) and policies directed to include fathers and enhance their involvement in their children's lives (e.g. expansion of paternity and parental leave provision targeted at fathers). Considering the results from the current research, parenting programmes could benefit from addressing parents' essentialist beliefs, identities and generating awareness of gatekeeping behaviours. By enhancing egalitarian and non-essentialist beliefs and addressing gatekeeping behaviours, programmes would help create the conditions that allow fathers to be actively involved in childcare. An important aspect that should be addressed by parenting programmes, and has been at times neglected, is the inclusion of data on their engagement with fathers (Fatherhood Institute, 2016). Without such data it is hard to understand what issues fathers are facing in the groups and what aspects can be improved in order to integrate fathers into parenting groups.

Father's early engagement is related to later involvement in childcare and child's life (Cabrera, Fagan, & Farrie, 2008; Cabrera, Hofferth, & Chae, 2011). Therefore, programmes should engage fathers before the child is born and encourage their frequent attendance, in order to insure long-term commitment and efficiency of the programmes' intervention. By doing so, fathers would have their place in the main provision of services, and would be included in all services and not such on the target selected few, making

services more effective, inclusive (Lloyd, O'Brien & Lewis, 2003) and to some extent gender neutral.

One measure used to identify gender inequality is the calculation of the "Cost of motherhood", the term refers to the increase on a woman's pay gap after becoming a mother (Glassdoor Economic Research, 2016). In Britain, when women have children, their pay gap increases by 14% points, being below the European average (Glassdoor Economic Research, 2016). The impact of motherhood extends beyond lower income, it can also translate into lower working hours, less progression in women's careers (due to interruptions or leave of the workforce), affecting women's overall earnings (OECD, 2015; Woodroffe, 2009). The findings from the current research suggest that primary caregiving fathers can potentially help to reduce the cost of motherhood. By being more involved, fathers are facilitating opportunities and creating conditions for mothers to fully pursuit a career and completely engage in the labour market. However, fathers' higher commitment to family does not come without difficulties. Research demonstrates that men can face more obstacles than women in their workplace when trying to be more involved in their family life (Berdahl & Moon, 2013; Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013). Those obstacles could be addressed by the provision of flexibility as an option for all jobs, that would help reducing the gender pay gap, as recommended in the latest House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee's gender pay gap report (House of Commons, 2016). Finally, gender equality is also facilitated by a reform on parental leave. There is a consensus among some researchers and organisations regarding the recommendation of an increased payment, financial incentives, non-transferable leave for fathers, on a 'use or lose it basis' (Dearing, 2016; Doucet, McKay, Tremblay, 2009; Fatherhood Institute, 2016; OECD, 2011). The recommendation of the combination of such measures is based on the difference between fathers alone time with the children and

family leave. The increase of paid benefits and financial incentives is likely to encourage fathers to take parental leave (Fatherhood Institute, 2016; OECD, 2011). Consequently, by taking parental leave alone, fathers are more likely to develop egalitarian parenting beliefs and develop parenting skills (Wall, 2014) while allowing mothers to be active in the labour market. In return, the mastery of parenting behaviours and skills could increase their satisfaction with parenting (Ferketich & Mercer, 1994; Hudson, Elek & Fleck, 2001).

Conclusion

Even though further research is needed to enhance our understanding of the relationship between the different variables and parents' time and task distribution and the consequences of role reversed arrangements, the current study explored the practices, social psychological mechanisms underlying role reversed arrangements and the consequences of non-traditional division for couples' personal well-being, relationship quality and life satisfaction.

The similarity of the performance and involvement in childcare within roles, teaches us about the circumstances and factors that make gender irrelevant. The findings illustrate how social prescriptions and structural characteristics are limiting the intersection between the mother and the father role, and help us understand how both roles can be more similar than different. The changes that accompany the reversal of roles, even if not originated intentionally, carry on to establish a more equal division of housework and childcare.

The findings also disclose how by being involved men are assisting women's career and help make a distinction between traditional and role reversed women's views of the appropriate parental role for men and women. Overall, parents' wish for a more balanced time division between home and work is also highlighted by the results. The findings help us understand how gender ideologies and non-essentialist perceptions differ between couples in different arrangements and how they relate to involvement in childcare and well-being, as well as the role of choice in well-being, life and marital satisfaction.

The process through which gender is 'undone' goes deeper the than structural characteristics that might drive change to surge. It is implemented in the daily practices

of family life, and conveys ideologies, beliefs and attitudes that relate to new meanings of parenthood.

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